

School of Marketing

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**Status Consumption and Uniqueness: Effects on Brand Judgement and
Purchase Intention**

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of
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A Dissertation entitled:

**Status Consumption and Uniqueness: Effects on Brand Judgement and Purchase
Intention**

By
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DECLARATIONS

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Signed: _____

Chelsey Renee Latter

Date: _____

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

“All our dreams can come true – if we have the courage to pursue them.” - Walt Disney

This thesis is dedicated to Professor Ian Phau and Dr Chris Marchegiani, the best supervisors
you could ask for.

Thanks must also go to Michael Lwin and Min Teah, my parents Mariette Latter and Leopold
Howell and my brothers Jesse and Lincoln.

Thank you for giving me the courage to pursue my dreams.

REFERENCES OF PUBLICATIONS FROM THE THESIS

Journal article

Latter, C., I. Phau, and C. Marchegiani. 2010. The role of consumers need for uniqueness and status consumption in haute couture luxury brands. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing* 1 - 4: 205 -213.

Conference Papers

Latter, C., I. Phau, and C. Marchegiani. 2011. *Consumers need for uniqueness and status: Do Australian generation y men and women purchase differently*. Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy. November 28 – November 30, Perth, Australia.

Latter, C., I. Phau, and C. Marchegiani. 2010. *The roles of consumers need for uniqueness and status consumption in haute couture luxury brands*. Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy. November 28 – December 1, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Latter, C., I. Phau, and C. Marchegiani. 2010. *Luxury and haute couture in the generation y market: consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption*. Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy. November 28 – December 1, Christchurch, New Zealand.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to assess Australian Generation Y consumers' purchase intentions towards luxury apparel brands in an effort to determine the effect brand perceptions (brand judgement and emotional value) have on status and non-status consumers.

Students at a large Western Australian university completed a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: the first assessed the respondents' need for uniqueness and status predispositions. The second used a visual stimulus to assess how brand perceptions affect purchase intention. A fictitious and an established brand were used to determine whether the familiarity of a brand influences brand perceptions and purchase intention. Further, the two brands were also independently examined.

The findings indicate that brand familiarity plays a key role in determining the purchase intention of status and non-status consumers. Under the fictitious condition, status consumers were not found to have significant relationships with any of the variables except brand understanding, which relates to how the respondent feels the brand considers their feelings. In comparison, under the established condition, status consumers have significant relationships with both brand perceptions (brand judgement and emotional value) and purchase intention. The three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness, namely creative choice counter-conformity, unpopular choice counter-conformity and avoidance of similarity, all had differing relationships with purchase intention under both conditions. Emotional value, however, was found to have the strongest and the most significant effect on purchase intentions under both the fictitious and the established conditions.

This study is based on a student sample and thus it may not be representative of the entire Australian Generation Y population. Future studies should look to include a more generalisable sample. It also alluded to high prices in terms of purchase intention but did not look at specific prices relative to purchase intention; future studies should look at the impact price has on the purchase intention of luxury apparel.

This study has achieved much significance. It measures and compares a fictitious and an established luxury apparel brand using a stimulus rather than a single image to engage the respondent. The comparison of fictitious and established luxury apparel brands is also a new concept for this category. This study looks at practical ways marketers can influence product acquisition behaviour in light of their need for uniqueness and status consumption behaviour. It has implications for advertising, product development and promotion campaigns and initiatives.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The acquisition of material goods is one of the strongest measures of social success and achievement, with research demonstrating the prevalence of expressing status through possessions more often than through any other avenue (Sangkhawasi and Johri 2007). According to Keller (2009), luxury brands outpace other consumer categories and thus they are responsible for the development of a US\$220 billion global industry. With the luxury fashion industry exceeding sales of US\$80 billion (Nuxoll 2007), the need to look at the younger emerging market has become a high priority.

In order to discover how Australian consumers' different motivations affect the purchase of luxury brands, marketers should first identify what leads young Australian consumers to purchase luxury brands and then devise the most effective strategies based on these findings. For the purpose of providing practical information to luxury brand marketers, this study looks at the impact of uniqueness, status, brand judgement and emotional value on Australian Generation Y consumers' purchasing intentions towards a haute couture luxury apparel brand. The results of this study contribute to the marketing arena and the body of literature on consumer behaviour towards luxury brands. Ultimately, the result will determine how best to effectively target this consumer market. The scope of luxury brands covered in this study was limited to fashion brands for two reasons. First, Generation Y Australian consumers, the focus of this study, are becoming increasingly familiar with brand names and products (Meagher April 6, 2011; Khoo and Conisbee 2008, 44), especially in the area of fashion. Second, owing to the very public and visible nature of fashion goods, the increase in their

distribution channels and the amount and scope of marketing communications, there has been an increase in luxury sales (Miller and Mills 2011; Husic and Cicic 2009).

1.2 Background

Intentionally or unintentionally, consumers have come to regard their possessions as part of themselves and their identities. According to Belk (1988), consumers to a large degree define themselves by what they have and possess. Valued material possessions are then seen to act as signs of self, with self being defined as the sum of all a consumer can call his or hers including but not limited to their possessions. This continual consumption and acquisition of material possessions attempts to differentiate consumers from others in an effort to develop a distinctive self and social image (Gil et al. 2011; Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001).

Since the construction of identity is a lifelong project, consumption is a form of both self-expression and self-definition, with the imposition of consumers' identities onto their possessions and vice versa (Belk 1988). Brands have come to be an important factor in the creation of individual identity (Gil et al. 2011; O'Cass and Frost 2002) and consumers have come to treat high levels of consumption as indicative of social success and personal happiness (Bian and Forsythe 2011; Nelissen and Meijers 2011; O'Cass and Choy 2008; Park, Rabolt, and Jeon 2008; Belk 1988). Through the consumption of products, individuals are constructing a unique identity meant for public consumption. All individuals crave uniqueness to some extent as displayed through the acquisition and display of distinctive products and brands (Ruvio, Shoham, and Brencic 2008), thus making the need for uniqueness a universal trait (Burns and Brady 1992). Given that fashion-conscious consumers, along with status-seeking consumers, have a great impact on the sale of luxury goods, it is assumed that there is an association between consumers who crave uniqueness

and status-seeking consumers who choose to construct their identities by wearing symbolic luxury apparel (Phau and Leng 2008).

This desire for uniqueness affects behaviours, leading to a desire for customised or scarce products (Lynn and Harris 1997), which also leads consumers to seek out non-traditional avenues for purchase. The display, use and purchase of such products decrease the perception of likeness to others. These choices are seen to prolong the lifespan of a product's uniqueness, as it is not available en masse. Consumers are also able to prolong product uniqueness by varying its norm or intended use. As products lose their uniqueness and become popular, consumers resist or counter this expectation by the initiation of a new search (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001). According to research by Bertrandias and Goldsmith (2006), individuals with a high need for uniqueness adopt products and brands quicker than do non-uniqueness-seeking consumers.

A consumer's search for unique and distinct products is no longer limited to traditional bricks and mortar stores (Knight and Kim 2007; Doran August 12, 2011). The emergence of globalisation has seen rapidly changing retail environments "fuelled by increasing global competition and higher consumer expectations" (Knight and Kim 2007, 270). International expansion is a common strategy pursued by companies both to expand their operations and to counteract maturing domestic retail environments (Knight and Kim 2007). Many luxury brands are also using alternative or new strategies as a launching platform to introduce new products or product ranges. This allows them to target potential consumers where they had no prior trade.

In a fashion context, various brands are not distinguishable to most consumers therefore; the associations of the brand name can play a critical role in separating one brand from another. Some associations influence purchase decisions by providing credibility and confidence in the brand, lending credence to the product itself (Aaker 1991). The emotions evoked by a brand can become so strongly associated that they are accessible during product consumption or use (Keller 2008). Brand associations therefore play a major role in consumers favouring one brand over another based on the recall of brand information (Jung and Sung 2008; Keller 1993). Findings by Lee et al. (2008), Ryan (2008), Knight and Kim (2007), Babin and Babin (2001) and Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) found emotional value influences purchase intention through brand loyalty and effect. Although Generation Y consumers' willingness to try fresh and unknown products and brands means established brands rely highly on conventional brand associations and emotional attachment which may no longer exist with these younger consumers.

According to Khoo and Conisbee (2008), Generation Y consumers (those born between 1977 and 1991) are both lucrative and fickle and are set to dominate the retail trade sector. In comparison to past generations, Generation Y consumers have "enormous spending power and strong interest in shopping" (Khoo and Conisbee 2008, 1), and by 2015 it is predicted that Generation Y will have the largest share of the consumer market (Doran August 12, 2011; Khoo and Conisbee 2008). Given the rapid growth and optimistic outlook for domestic and international retailing (Knight and Kim 2007), businesses who embrace Generation Y consumers are set to benefit (Khoo and Conisbee 2008). What should matter most is not how much it costs to acquire Generation Y consumers but how much value is created as a consequence of these new opportunities. O'Cass and Frost (2002) established that young consumers are motivated by the need to possess and display status brands, while Wong and

Ahuvia (1998) found that Western consumers more likely to be involved in luxury consumption.

According to Clark, Zboja and Goldsmith (2007, 45) “status seeking consumers are concerned with what relevant groups consider the best (and by extension prestigious) choices to help gain group status”. For young people, these symbols are especially pertinent, as they are often in stages of uncertainty, gathering material possessions as a way of establishing their identities and gaining much-needed prestige (Belk 1988; Gil et al. 2011). Young adults are particularly susceptible to group influences and the approval and acceptance of their peers. Socially consumed products, namely products highly visible to others, come with a high degree of perceived risk (Bian and Forsythe 2011). “Owning the latest styles of clothing is one of the most common ways consumers have of gaining prestige among their peers” (Goldsmith, Flynn, and Eastman 1996, 310); therefore, consumer choices are more likely to be contingent upon the consumption choices of socially significant others. In situations of high perceived social risk, individuals are more likely to anticipate the likely evaluations of others and make consumption choices accordingly (Piacentini and Maller 2004). These young consumers’ need to bolster their images by having ‘cool’ looks and “generally prefer brands with an identity based on values with which they can identify and through which they can express their individuality” (Knight and Kim 2007, 271), which make luxury brands pertinent to this demographic.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to fill the gaps present in the existing literature on consumers’ need for uniqueness and status consumption by looking at the luxury fashion market with a distinct focus on an haute couture fashion house. Studies of uniqueness and status in relation to

luxury goods have been undertaken, but not in a context where they have been examined concurrently. This study aims to understand how brand judgements and emotional responses influence the purchase intentions of consumers towards the luxury fashion apparel produced by an haute couture fashion house. In particular, the study compares the effect of an established brand name to a fictional brand name on the brand perceptions (brand judgement and emotional value) and purchase intentions of a luxury apparel brand's ready-to-wear range. The inclusion of a fictional brand, which can be considered to be the equivalent of a brand that is simply unknown to consumers, allows for the comparison and generalisability of the results.

1.4 Research Objectives and Questions

This research plans to add to the current literature on consumers' need for uniqueness on the brand perceptions and purchase intentions of luxury brands by building on the research chiefly carried out by Knight and Kim (2007) and Ryan (2008). The analysis of the existent literature and the aforementioned key studies, which are discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 3, led to the following objectives and questions:

- To determine whether consumers' need for uniqueness affects and influences brand judgement and emotional value (H1).
- To determine whether status consumption affects and influences brand judgement and emotional value (H2).
- To determine whether brand judgement influences emotional value (H3).
- To determine whether brand judgement and emotional value influences purchase intention (H4).
- To determine whether consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption influences purchase intention (H5).

- To determine whether emotional value mediates purchase intention (H6/H8/H10).
- To determine whether brand judgement mediates purchase intention (H7/H9).

This study aims to explore the above research objectives along with several research questions:

- Does familiarity with a brand influence brand judgement, emotional value and purchase intention in high-end luxury apparel?
- How does a fictitious brand compare with an established brand?

1.5 Definitions of Key Theories

A number of key theories are drawn from this research in order to develop and understand the research problems, design and analysis. These key theories are discussed below.

(a) Self-Image Congruity Theory

Self-image congruity is used to look at the relationship between the consumer and the brand. The consumer takes into account both the functional and the psychological attributes of the product/brand and considers how they fit with his/her own self-concept (Chebat, Sirgy, and St-James 2006; Sirgy 1985, 1982). The closer consumers perceive the brand to be to their own self-images, the higher is the likelihood of purchase.

(b) Consumers' Need for Uniqueness Theory

Consumers' need for uniqueness explains that an individual's need to be different from others is stimulated when they feel that their sense of uniqueness is being threatened. These

individuals may then engage in certain behaviours or actions where the social penalties are low in order to differentiate themselves (Snyder and Fromkin 1977).

(c) Status Consumption

Status consumption refers to the motivational process consumers engage in to improve their social standings through the purchase, display and consumption of products and brands that symbolise status (Eastman and Goldsmith 1999). Status-seeking consumers are primarily concerned with what relevant groups consider the best choices and view products in terms of the social advantages their purchase offers (Mason 1992).

(d) Customer-based Brand Equity

Customer-based brand equity is the study of brand equity from the perspective of the individual consumer (Keller 1993). It looks at the fact different outcomes result from the marketing of a product because of its brand name in comparison to a product lacking brand identification (Jung and Sung 2008).

(e) The Theory of Planned Behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour is an extension of the previous theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). It states that attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control are able to predict an individual's intentions and also predict behaviour (Ajzen 1991).

1.6 Definitions of Key Constructs

The following constructs form the basis of the theoretical framework outlined and developed in Chapter 3:

- (a) Consumers' need for uniqueness is marked by an individual's pursuit of material goods to differentiate themselves from others. This need can be demonstrated by three types of consumer behaviour: (1) creative choice counter-conformity, (2) unpopular choice counter-conformity and (3) avoidance of similarity (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001).
- (b) Status consumption is characterised by the relative position in the hierarchy of the group accorded to the consumer by other members of the group, and it manifests itself in the need to elevate this position by the conspicuous display of products and brands (Husic and Cicic 2009; Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith 2007).
- (c) Brand judgement is how consumers piece together all the different performance and imagery associations of a given brand to form an opinion. Consumers use multiple cues to determine these judgements including perceived quality, credibility, consideration and superiority (Keller 2001).
- (d) Emotional value refers to consumers' feelings or affective reactions to certain stimuli (Sweeney and Soutar 2001). These emotional responses towards a brand can vary across a spectrum of positive to negative and can be mild or intense in nature (Keller 2001).
- (e) Purchase intention refers to the investigation of the influence that attitudes, personal and cultural determinants and volitional control have on a consumer's intentions or willingness to purchase a given product or brand (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980).

1.7 Other Key Definitions

- (a) Brand is defined as the “distinguishing name and symbol (such as a logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors” (Aaker, 1991, 7).

- (b) Haute couture is the prestigious front for French creative fashion (recently a number of fashion houses outside Paris have been afforded membership) and original design and refers to “wildly expensive garments made to measure for an elite cadre of the world’s ultra-rich...where designers unleash their creativity, using the finest materials and techniques” (Barchfield July 15, 2009, 3). A protected name in France haute couture can only be used by fashion houses that meet strict, well-defined guidelines that delineate the practice, dictating a minimum number of original designs as well as a baseline number of technical workers. There are currently only 11 fully-fledged members of the *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture*; correspondents and guests make up the remaining 24 members (Barchfield July 15, 2009).

- (c) Ready to wear can be defined as clothing designed, marketed and sold in standard sizes and which is often mass-produced, namely the more affordable, lesser priced, but still costly designer label clothing.

1.8 Research Design

The research design revolves around a self-administered questionnaire developed for the purpose of this study (see Appendix A). First, the questionnaire examined the relationship

between the antecedent constructs consumers' need for uniqueness/status consumption and brand perceptions (brand judgement and emotional value). Second, the relationship between brand judgement and emotional value was examined. Third, the direct relationship among all the antecedent variables in relation to purchase intention was examined. The final evaluation was to test whether brand perception played a mediating role in consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption towards purchase intention.

The questionnaire made use of existing scales to measure consumers' need for uniqueness (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001), status consumption (Eastman and Goldsmith 1999), brand judgement (Keller 2008), emotional value (Sweeney and Soutar 2001) and purchase intention (Bower and Landreth 2001; Baker and Churchill 1977). All scales were measured via statements on a seven-point Likert scale.

Data were collected from a convenience sample of 518 Australian Generation Y consumers. The sample was generated from a large Western Australia university. Analyses involved a variety of statistical techniques, including descriptive statistics, factor analyses and regression analyses, to test for linkages between the key constructs in order to address the hypotheses and research questions.

1.9 Scope of the Study

The luxury fashion industry continues to be a lucrative, albeit competitive, one, with global sales worth upward of US\$80 billion despite the fact purchases are often out of proportion with consumers' actual incomes (Nuxoll 2007). Estimates of the luxury brand industry believe there to be as many as 114 different fashion houses, each of whom contributes to the luxury apparel market (Moore, Fernie, and Burt 2000). Owing to the ultra-competitive

market, brands look for ways to offer differentiation and avenues to extend and expand. As such, this study focuses on an haute couture luxury apparel brand with a distinct focus on the emerging Australian Generation Y market. With Generation Y representing 26% of the adult population and 21% of the Australian population (Khoo and Conisbee 2008), this makes Generation Y an important market for luxury fashion.

1.10 Delimitations

Some delimitations of this research must be explained regarding the scope of the study/research design. The research uses a segment of the population, specifically Generation Y university students. While the literature on consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption in university students is well recognised (Rajamma et al. 2010 Knight and Kim 2007; Eastman and Goldsmith 1999; Lynn and Harris 1997), it is still unknown how generalisable the results of this study will be on the entire Australian Generation Y population.

Furthermore, this study uses a clothing brand (Christian Dior) and category usually associated with symbolic and hedonic attributes, which may have resulted in a greater influence of emotional value on purchase intention. Nonetheless, the brand used in the research is an internationally acclaimed brand and it provides the framework for which to base future studies. Further limitations and the directions for future research are discussed in Chapter 6.

1.11 Significance of the Study

The significant theoretical, methodological and managerial contributions of this study are broadly discussed below.

Theoretical Significance

- This study contributes to understanding how theoretical underpinnings from branding, psychology and consumer behaviour can be interwoven in the context of consumer motivations, in particular the motivations towards consumers' need for uniqueness.
- This research provides insights into decision-making and behaviour when there are conflicts between the motivation to conform or seek differentiation.
- This study also extends the application of consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption into the domain of luxury brands using an haute couture luxury apparel brand as the stimulus.
- These results also illustrate the necessity of not testing consumers' need for uniqueness as a unified concept (Ryan 2008; Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith 2007) if a higher degree of rigour is desired, as results varied from one factor to the other.
- This study taps into the importance of examining Generation Y as a distinct cohort, as the findings indicate that deviations exist between Australian Generation Y consumers and the Generation Y consumers previously studied (Northern Asia and the United States) (O'Cass and Choy 2008; Park, Rabolt, and Jeon 2008; Knight and Kim 2007).
- This research supports previous research (Jung and Sung 2008; Keller 1993; Aaker 1991) that states different outcomes result from the marketing of a product because of its brand name in comparison to a product lacking brand identification. The results show that purchase motivation varies based on brand name associations alone.

Methodological Significance

- This study creates an important starting point for future research on measuring consumers' need for uniqueness concurrently with status consumption.
- It is the first identified study to compare a fictitious brand to an established brand in the context of luxury apparel.
- The established brand judgement scale varies between established market brands and fictitious or newly emerging brands. The results indicate that the brand judgement scale could be used in both samples, although deviations exist in the two conditions. This is an important methodological finding as established and fictitious brands cannot be measured concurrently using the same scale.

Managerial Significance

- These findings help identify specifically what attracts consumers to purchase luxury apparel brands.
- The study supports the belief that exposure to a recognised luxury apparel brand can prompt brand judgement and emotional responses in status-seeking consumers.
- This research demonstrates the value of consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption scales in explaining fashion adoption behaviour, especially pertaining to luxury apparel.
- Stemming from the results, better communication messages can be developed based on the brand's product lifecycle, brand judgement and emotional value as perceived by Australian Generation Y consumers. Psychological and demographic segmentation statistics allow managers to make better informed decisions, which enables them to categorise their clientele into market segments with similar interests.

1.12 Organisation

This thesis consists of six chapters designed to outline and address the research objectives and provide insight and understanding into two selected motivational consumer behaviours relating to an haute couture luxury apparel brand.

This chapter provided a brief overview of the planned research. Chapter 2 provides a detailed literature review on the key topics relevant to this study. This includes how consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption may affect consumer behaviour and what role brand perceptions (brand judgement and emotional value) play in the motivation behind purchase decisions. It concludes with the identification of research gaps and gives a brief justification on the research to be conducted.

Chapter 3 presents the conceptual framework and theoretical foundations of the study. Further, this chapter discusses the research objectives and formulates the research hypotheses. This chapter begins with the proposed research model.

Chapter 4 addresses the research methodology. It explains the sample population, survey instrument, data collection procedure and measurement of the constructs. The justification for the use of these instruments and procedures and their relationships to previous research are also outlined.

Chapter 5 provides a statistical analysis of the data collected. It also explains in detail what particular techniques were used for the analysis of the data and the rules governing the use of these techniques.

Chapter 6 concludes the thesis, which includes a general discussion of the study, followed by theoretical and managerial contributions. The chapter is concluded with the limitations of this research, and directions and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A vast body of knowledge exists regarding the attitudes involved in the consumption of luxury brands. The purchase of products for their symbolic and social value rather than for their inherent utility is now widely recognised as a significant determinant of consumer behaviour (Mason 1992). With changes in industry trends, gaps in knowledge are created and thus it is important to examine luxury brands in relation to uniqueness. Moreover, whether consumers' need for uniqueness is in fact a need for status in this younger emerging market should be examined.

This research plans to integrate earlier research from two academic areas that have examined uniqueness. First, there is considerable research in psychology on how consumers use possessions to define identity (Goldsmith and Clark 2008; Phau and Leng 2008; Knight and Kim 2007; Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith 2007; O'Cass and Frost 2002; Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001; Simonson and Nowls 2000; Campbell 1995; Belk 1988). Furthermore, marketing has examined how a variety of factors influences the consumption of certain products and brands. Studies have found that status-seeking consumers are concerned with their peers and use brands to convey this message (Ruvio, Shoham, and Brencic 2008; O'Cass and Frost 2002).

Having given a brief outline of this thesis in Chapter 1, this chapter gives a detailed description and analysis of the previous literature relating to the key constructs of this study.

This chapter serves to analyse how the constructs have been developed and utilised for the purpose of this study. To begin with, a background of the constructs in the literature is presented, followed by a discussion on how the constructs have been employed in previous studies. In the course of the review process, various gaps in the literature are acknowledged for further study. This chapter then concludes with the outline of the relevance of these gaps to the aims and objectives of the current study.

2.2 Australian Generation Y as Global Consumers

The Australian Generation Y market is a dynamic and extremely competitive environment (Phau and Leng 2008). In 2012, it encompassed 4.2 million Australians and 20% of the full-time workforce (Meares January 4, 2012), thus providing a market segment open to generalisations (Khoo and Conisbee 2008). Although this segment seems to offer a plethora of opportunities for new entrants and a great scope for innovations, the target audience is notoriously hard to please because it has been exposed to marketing since birth (Phau and Leng 2008; Khoo and Conisbee 2008). These savvy consumers are influenced by all facets of technology, which makes them difficult to target. According to Khoo and Conisbee (2008), Generation Y consumers have an apt cynicism towards marketing, they take risks, aspire to be creative and unique and are prepared to try fresh and unknown products and brands (Simonson and Nowls 2000) – quite simply they are the most materially endowed, the most highly educated and the most technologically savvy generation ever (Meares January 4, 2012).

Limited brand loyalty within this segment means traditional brands can quickly lose touch with these consumers. Spurred by 17 years of uninterrupted economic growth in Australia,

this market is cash-rich (Khoo and Conisbee 2008). The global financial crisis in 2008 did nothing to deter Generation Y's trademark spending, with the Commonwealth Bank 2009 report showing spending rose by a rate of 6.2% (Meares January 4, 2012). Thanks to a decrease in the affordability of the housing market, the average disposable income has increased and as a result Generation Y has enormous spending potential. In 2015, Generation Y is predicted to have the largest share of the consumer market and thus it is set to dominate retail trade (Khoo and Conisbee 2008).

Generation Y women have a higher comparative disposable income with significantly greater spending power and potential than both their predecessors, the Baby Boomers and Generation X. Furthermore, Generation Y men are a lot more liberal about the purchase of luxury products and stylish living than were their predecessors. Consequently, Generation Y men shop more than did their predecessors and they have increased their ranges of purchase (Khoo and Conisbee 2008).

However, limited research has been conducted using the Australian Generation Y market in regards to their attitudes towards uniqueness and luxury brands. According to Phau and Cheong (2009), consumers between the ages of 30 and 50 years have traditionally been the prime market for luxury goods. The importance of adult consumers has been explored in depth, but less attention has been paid to the emergence of symbolic consumption in young people.

2.3 Consumers' Need for Uniqueness

The theory of consumers' need for uniqueness stems from Snyder and Fromkin's (1977) work on uniqueness theory. This theory operates from the premise that consumers find a high level of similarity to others highly undesirable and seek to differentiate themselves by adopting various behaviours. Material expressions of uniqueness are highly valued as the social risks associated with this form of display and consumption is seen to be relatively low (Tian and McKenzie 2001; Snyder 1992). The level of uniqueness consumers seek is constrained only by the need for social affiliation and social approval, leaving consumers to seek avenues to explore and demonstrate their uniqueness in ways that do not inhibit or result in social isolation and disapproval (Snyder and Fromkin 1977).

Research has found that consumers' need for uniqueness is more specific than simply the need for individualisation and that it is also distinct from independence (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001). Consumers' need for uniqueness reflects both the self-image and the social image enhancement process and it is dependent on the good becoming a publicly recognised symbol. This need to be different can be considered to be an individual's motivation to counter conform to societal norms, one of three aspects in consumers' need for uniqueness. This deviation from the norm is viewed as an avenue for individuals to enhance their self-concepts through the utilisation of possessions, especially those deemed scarce or rare (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001; Snyder and Fromkin 1977). "Because luxury brands are inherently scarce due to their high price and restricted distribution, they can become a tool to convey uniqueness" (Bian and Forsythe 2011, 3).

Previous research on the effect of social interaction on consumer behaviour has identified conformity and rebellion as the two competing influences on decision-making (Simonson and

Nowls 2000; Eastman and Goldsmith 1999; Snyder and Fromkin 1977). The basic motivation behind differentiation or alternatively conformity is the enhancement of self-image (Husic and Cicic 2009).

According to research conducted by Tian, Bearden and Hunter (2001) on the validation of consumers' need for uniqueness scales, it was found that neither gender nor education had an impact on consumers' need for uniqueness. However, a negative relationship was found with consumer age, as need for uniqueness decreases with age, which makes studying Generation Y consumers a key market segment.

There are three facets to which consumers' need for uniqueness is apparent: creative choice counter-conformity, unpopular choice counter-conformity and avoidance of similarity (Ruvio, Shoham, and Brencic 2008; Knight and Kim 2007; Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001).

- (1) Creative choice counter-conformity refers to the search for social differentness through the consumption of products that are acceptable to others (Knight and Kim 2007; Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001).
- (2) Unpopular choice counter-conformity is where consumers willingly risk social disapproval to establish their uniqueness. They consume products considered to be outside group norms (Knight and Kim 2007).
- (3) Avoidance of similarity refers to consumers' avoidance of mainstream products and the tendency to favour products or brands that are unpopular or not likely to become popular (Knight and Kim 2007).

For the purpose of this thesis, the following conceptual definition proposed by Tian, Bearden and Hunter (2001, 52) is used:

“Consumers’ need for uniqueness is defined as the trait of pursuing differentness relative to others through the acquisition, utilization, and disposition of consumer goods for the purpose of developing and enhancing one’s self-image and social image”.

This conceptual definition was developed by testing on consumer goods both in the scale development and in subsequent tests rather than by testing on services as had been carried out in the past. This scale has also been applied to a fashion context, thereby enabling a greater amount of validity and reliability (Knight and Kim 2007).

Linked as it is to the concept of conformity, consumers’ need for uniqueness deserves study as a motivating factor in purchase intention as extant research shows it can have a significant effect on purchase decisions. An individual’s need for uniqueness is ultimately a psychological variable (Snyder and Fromkin 1977). It has been found that the psychological (including the need for uniqueness) and brand antecedents of an individual have a significant and positive effect on conspicuous consumption, namely “the tendency for individuals to enhance their image, through overt consumption of possessions, which communicates status to others” (O’Cass and McEwen 2004, 34). Furthermore, the congruency of self-concept, brand image and brand arouse feelings that contribute towards the antecedents for consumers’ purchase decisions of conspicuous and unique brands.

The relationships between these three constructs have been studied regarding the topic of conspicuous consumption, where it has been found that purchase intention can be predicted based on how congruent an individual's measure of self-concept and brand image are. When there is a merger between an individual's self-concept and the product image, predicting consumer behaviour can be more accurate (Onkvisit and Shaw 1987). This has also been highlighted regarding the link between self-concept and consumption.

The study of uniqueness on replacement behaviours can be applied to the fashion industry where trends and styles are everchanging (Bertrandias and Goldsmith 2006). Many previous studies of fashion consumption, consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption have been conducted on a predominately Asian or a European sample (Bian and Forsythe 2011; Kumar, Kim, and Pelton 2009; O'Cass and Choy 2008; Park, Rabolt, and Jeon 2008; Ruvio, Shoham, and Brencic 2008; Knight and Kim 2007). Few studies have been conducted using an Australian sample, in particular a unified gender Generation Y sample, and thus there continues to be a lack of cross-cultural comparison and understanding.

Previous research has been conducted on consumers' need for uniqueness in several countries throughout Asia using Generation Y (Kumar, Kim, and Pelton 2009; O'Cass and Choy 2008; Knight and Kim 2007). Knight and Kim (2007) found that Japanese consumers purchase and use brands to fulfil their needs for uniqueness and individuality. Furthermore, it was found that brand image perceptions are influenced by consumers' need for uniqueness with further research on Korean consumers establishing a positive relationship between the need for uniqueness and the usage of global luxury brands (Park, Rabolt, and Jeon 2008). In comparison, Amaldoss and Jain (2005b) found that consumers steer clear of the purchase of luxury and high quality goods because of their desire for uniqueness and that demand for a

product among consumers who desire uniqueness increases with its price. However, Bernheim (1994) showed that when status is sufficiently important relative to intrinsic utility, many people conform to a single standard of behaviour, despite underlying heterogeneous preferences (Amaldoss and Jain 2005b).

Research has shown this behaviour is symptomatic of consumers' need for uniqueness, an enduring personality trait in which consumers actively pursue dissimilarity as a means of developing a unique self and social image (Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith 2007; Knight and Kim 2007; Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001).

2.4 Luxury Apparel/Brands and Status

Social determinants play a big role in the selection of brands. Research has shown that the interaction between individuals and society demonstrates society's responses and attitudes towards the inherent symbolic meaning of brands. Thus, a consumer's behaviour and likely purchase of a brand is determined by others (Shukla 2008). When consumers purchase and endorse a specific brand, they are communicating their desire to be associated with the kinds of people also perceived to consume the brand (Phau and Prendergast 2000), the brand image and the lifestyle projected by the brand (Husic and Cicic 2009). Luxury brands possess a desirability that extends beyond their utilitarian functions and provides the consumer with a perceived status through ownership. Consequently, luxury brands can command premium prices (Moore and Birtwistle 2005). According to O'Cass and Frost (2002), brands are increasingly seen as an important factor in creating and maintaining a sense of identity and achievement. O'Cass and McEwen (2004, 26) stated: "It is also evident that, certain brand dimensions and associations lead to increased marketplace recognition and economic success as a result of the value consumers place on them". The subsequent argument is such that

luxury brands are often consumed to indicate status and as such displayed conspicuously to provide a visual representation (O'Cass and McEwen 2004) and thus consumers are “motivated by a desire to impress others with their ability to pay particularly high prices for prestigious products” (Husic and Cicic 2009, 234). Clark, Zboja and Goldsmith (2007) characterised status as the relative position in the hierarchy of a group accorded to them by other members of the group, which is based on characteristics such as honour and prestige.

“Status is a form of power that consists of respect, consideration, and envy from others and represents the goals of a culture. Many people desire status and devote a lot of energy to acquiring it” (Barkow 1992 as cited by Eastman and Goldsmith 1999, 42).

Scholars distinguish between three different types of status:

1. Status by assignment (e.g. royalty);
2. Status by achievement; and
3. Status by consumption

The focus of this study is on the final type of status, that which is acquired through possession. Products as previously mentioned have symbolic uses. “Consumers acquire, own, use and display certain goods and services to enhance their sense of self, to present an image of what they are like, to represent what they feel and think, and to bring about the types of social relationships they wish to have” (Eastman and Goldsmith 1999, 42).

The acquisition of material goods is one of the strongest measures of social success and achievement, with research demonstrating the prevalence of expressing status through

possessions more often than through any other avenue (Sangkhawasi and Johri 2007). Eastman and Goldsmith (1999) express the views of Packard (1959) who defined 'status seekers' as consumers who continually seek to surround themselves with visible evidence of the superior rank they are claiming. The variance comes in the form of the extent to which consumers seek products that are seen to confer status. Moreover, consumers differ in how much they seek to gain prestige by consuming status goods (Eastman and Goldsmith 1999).

Status consumption has been viewed as the driving force behind the enhancement of social standing through the overt consumption of possessions (Phau and Leng 2008; Piacentini and Mailer 2004; O'Cass and McEwen 2004; O'Cass and Frost 2002). According to Husic and Cicic (2009), luxury items are becoming a necessity. As discretionary income increases and the media promote immediate self-indulgence, consumers are seeking recognition from others. The behavioural tendency to value status and to acquire and consume products that provide status to the individual (O'Cass and McEwen 2004) is reliant on the product becoming a publicly recognised good, as is the case with consumers' need for uniqueness. In fact, if luxury products are not priced high, they lose their rarity and exclusivity characteristics (Dubois and Duquesne 1993). In some ways, a higher price makes consumers feel superior, one of the rare elite who can afford these products (Garfein 1989).

According to recent research, the consumption of luxury products is less about price and more about the pleasure derived from their use (Piacentini and Mailer 2004) with price only serving to act as a proof of quality. Research conducted by Piacentini and Mailer (2004) showed that young adults from wealthier families are less likely to engage in status consumption, with further research by Deeter-Schmelz et al. (2000) and O'Cass and McEwen (2004) ascertaining that a consumer's income has little effect on his or her status-seeking

behaviour. Consumers at every class level have a desire to consume for status. Consumers today have a larger disposable income than ever before, most dramatically in the higher social classes and thus they are willing to pay considerably higher prices for luxury products (Husic and Cicic 2009; Khoo and Conisbee 2008; Piacentini and Mailer 2004).

On one hand, purchasing luxury fashion is about being ‘in fashion’ and participating in a group movement. On the other hand, it is about expressing uniqueness (Staff Writers June 22, 2011). Even though status consumers and consumers with a high need for uniqueness buy luxury products for apparently opposite reasons, their basic motivation is the same, the enhancement of self-image (Husic and Cicic 2009). A paradox exists: status consumers will purchase products with visible logos to conspicuously display status and wealth, whereas consumers with a need for uniqueness will also purchase luxury brands but pay a higher amount for a hidden brand label (Husic and Cicic 2009). According to the extant literature, this behaviour illuminates the present situation in luxury apparel. On one side, consumers wish to distinguish themselves, while on the other side there are those who imitate the ‘trendsetters’ including their aspiration to distinguish themselves.

2.4.1 Normative Influence

“Susceptibility to reference group influence (normative) directly relates to an individual’s status consumption tendencies” (O’Cass and McEwen 2004, 34). Conceptually, this means that certain products and brands are used to provide entry into certain groups. It seems that the need to identify with or enhance one’s image in the opinion of significant others operates closely with both status consumption and conspicuous consumption. This finding is important as both consumption for status and that for uniqueness requires the impact of interpersonal influence (O’Cass and McEwen 2004; Tian and McKenzie 2001). Symbolic consumption is employed not only to create and maintain self but to distinguish a place in

society (Wattanasuwan 2005) and thus it cannot be achieved without the presence of others (O'Cass and McEwen 2004). The extant literature denotes that the consumption of conspicuous goods is determined by normative group influence (Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith 2007; Knight and Kim 2007; O'Cass and McEwen 2004; Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001). "Individuals who plan on using items publicly are more likely to be influenced by others so as to decrease the risk of choosing the 'wrong' brand or product" (Blackwell, Miniard, and Engel 2006, 527).

Clark, Zboja and Goldsmith (2007) see group membership as a necessity along with being psychologically satisfying. As consumers seldom operate in a vacuum, reference groups become paramount to decisions on product and brand purchases. People imitate group members in order to be accepted as group members themselves (Eastman and Goldsmith 1999). Despite the influence of normative pressure, many consumers choose to intentionally go against the group to distinguish themselves. The purchase of prestigious products and brands can alleviate the feelings of similarity and help consumers feel unique. Similarly, status consumers desire to be elevated to a unique position within the group.

2.4.2 Haute Couture and Ready to Wear

Haute couture is the prestigious front for French creative fashion (only in the past decade have a number of fashion houses outside Paris been afforded membership) and original design and refers to "wildly expensive garments made to measure for an elite cadre of the world's ultra-rich...where designers unleash their creativity, using the finest materials and techniques" (Barchfield July 15, 2009, 3). A single haute couture piece can require as many as 500 hours and multiple fittings. While haute couture may seem outdated or uneconomical, it provides the necessary glamour to compensate for the ready-to-wear initiatives of fashion

houses (Catry 2003, 13). Labels consider couture lines and their “lavish, media-saturated showcases to be headline grabbing investments that help bolster sales of more accessible ready-to-wear collections and accessories, perfume and cosmetics lines” (Barchfield July 15, 2009). According to Blanks (2010), the whole spectacle facade is used to persuade new clients that long-established couture houses still have the cash and confidence to show off. Styles that debut here often trickle down to retail consumers in the form of more reasonably priced ready-to-wear collections, while publicising the rare and exclusive factor.

A protected name in France, haute couture can only be used by fashion houses that meet strict, well-defined guidelines that delineate the practice, dictating a minimum number of original designs as well as a baseline number of technical workers. There are currently only 11 fully-fledged members of the *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture*; correspondents and guests make up the remaining 24 members (Barchfield July 15, 2009). When consumers buy luxury products they distance themselves from the mass and from one another through the emotional value of acquiring well-crafted and rare objects (Catry 2003).

2.4.3 Scarcity/Rarity Principle

Luxury products do not exist today as they did in the past, where only a very select few could afford the high prices; they now operate in a paradox. Prices are high based on the attribute of exclusivity while selling to everyone (Husic and Cicic 2009). In order to appeal to a consumer’s desire for uniqueness, marketers develop advertising messages that employ the product scarcity principle (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001). The product scarcity principle operates on the notion that the perceived scarcity of the product enhances its desirability. The rarity principle operates on the same premise. As defined by Phau and Prendergast (2000, 122) the rarity principle suggests that “in order to maintain prestige, luxury brands must

sustain high levels of awareness and tightly controlled brand diffusion to enhance exclusivity”.

Irrespective of monetary value, scarcity can increase the attractiveness of a product as it can add a sense of specialness to the individual’s self-concept. Products and brands considered to be both scarce and rare are particularly desirable to consumers who are high in need for uniqueness. The possession of scarce products is also fuelled by the desire for status; having rare possessions can also be a marker of one’s higher social standing, one of the elite (Snyder 1992). According to Snyder (1992), as children we are taught that scarce objects offer more intrinsic value than do plentiful ones, denoting a sense of uniqueness and the status afforded to the product. The extant literature shows that luxury consumers want to be different no matter the price, so they turn to products to which others have limited access (Husic and Cicic 2009).

Luxury consumption is fuelled by the notion of scarcity. Luxury apparel is inhibited by consumers’ abilities to pay high prices, meaning fewer consumers can afford the high price tags, thus limiting the perceived scope of distribution and purchase. As stated in Vuitton bags the affluent customers: How luxury goods companies woo the wealthy (2005), why would consumers want to spend thousands of dollars on a one-of-a-kind designer item if it is perceived to be a mass commodity? Alluding to the principle of the more you succeed in selling the less exclusive your product becomes, leading luxury brands walk a fine line between mass market appeal and exclusivity and prestige.

2.5 Consumers' Brand Perceptions and Purchase Intentions

Increasingly, brands are seen as important in creating identity, a sense of achievement and identification for consumers. They have become “part of a new social protocol where your identity and self-worth are determined by the visible brands on your body” (Husic and Cicic 2009, 3). According to Belk (1988), the purchase of objects offers consumers a means of investing in self; therefore “brands strive to elicit strong, positive relationships with their target consumers” (Knight and Kim 2007, 272). Consumers consider many aspects of the brand when making a purchase including evaluating whether the brand satisfies their emotional needs (Kumar, Kim, and Pelton 2009). According to Keller (2008), more and more companies are attempting to tap into consumer emotions with their brands. Previous research has found that emotional response plays a key role in determining purchase intention and that it is twice as likely to account for purchase intention than is cognition (Knight and Kim 2007). This has led researchers to recognise that consumers respond to brands in two ways during the decision-making process, namely cognitively and emotionally (Knight and Kim 2007; Babin and Babin 2001). Consumers who feel good and are pleased about the purchase of a brand will according to Kumar, Kim and Pelton (2009) purchase and even repurchase the brand even when given alternative options.

Knight and Kim (2007), who surveyed Japanese Generation Y consumers, found that emotional value has a significant impact on purchase intention, as did Babin and Babin (2001) who surveyed American consumers. Consumers perceived emotional value refers to their affective reactions to a brand; this is especially true for fashion because a preoccupation with appearance and socially consumed goods is directly linked to the personalities of consumers (Knight and Kim 2007; Bertrandias and Goldsmith 2006). As a product category, fashion induces a high level of involvement and interest because of its symbolic and hedonic

nature (Kumar, Kim, and Pelton 2009), thus exposing consumers to others' judgements and making it both a socially and an emotionally risky product (Bertrandias and Goldsmith 2006). As outlined by Park, Rabolt, and Jeon (2008), young Korean consumers consider global luxury brands to be status-oriented possessions. It is therefore assumed that this perception reinforces the purchase intentions of luxury brands for status-seeking consumers.

Yoo and Donthu (2002) defined perceived quality as a consumer's subjective judgement about a brand's overall excellence or superiority, with consumers as discussed earlier using multiple cues to determine brand quality including price, image, performance and country of origin. Similarly, Keller (2001) defined brand judgement as consumers' personal opinions about brands based on how they combine performance and image associations including perceived quality, credibility, consideration and superiority.

According to Hoyer and Brown (1990) as outlined by Knight and Kim (2007, 273), consumers have a variety of different attitudes towards brands; however, perceived quality is the most important in terms of purchase intention, particularly for unfamiliar brands. Knight and Kim's (2007) results support this finding by adding yet another dimension, namely creative choice, which they found has a positive effect on perceived quality. This implies that brands with superior images play an important role in expressing uniqueness and individuality and ultimately impact purchase intention. This coincides with research by O'Cass and Choy (2008) who proved the relationship between brand status and brand attitude.

A multitude of factors including self-concept, need for uniqueness and the level of clothing interest can influence brand judgement. This study is designed to determine the factors

influencing Australian consumers' purchase intentions towards a luxury apparel brand (Kumar, Kim, and Pelton 2009).

2.6 Research Gaps

This review of the literature has highlighted certain key areas that have either not been studied before or have been studied in a limited capacity, which serves to make this study unique and meaningful. These areas will be referred to as gaps and they are summarised below.

- (a) Since material goods have been identified as a good form of demonstrating differentiation, consumers' need for uniqueness has slowly gained popularity as a topic in the marketing discipline. The consumption patterns of consumers with varying degrees of uniqueness have been widely studied and applied to a number of consumer goods with the exclusion of luxury apparel, in particular the mass customisation of luxury apparel (Rajamma et al. 2010; Knight and Kim 2007).
- (b) Despite the growing importance of Generation Y consumers who according to Khoo and Conisbee (2008) are set to dominate retail trade in the next five years, limited research has been conducted using an Australian Generation Y sample in regards to their attitudes towards uniqueness and luxury brands. Phau and Cheong (2009) showed that consumers between the ages of 30 and 50 years have traditionally been the prime market for luxury goods. The importance of adult consumers has been explored in depth, but less attention has been paid to the emergence of symbolic consumption in young people. Studies with a Generation Y sample have been

conducted throughout Asia and the US (Kumar, Kim, and Pelton 2009; Lee et al. 2008; O'Cass and Choy 2008; Park, Rabolt, and Jeon 2008; Ruvio, Shoham, and Brencic 2008; Knight and Kim 2007), allowing a basis for comparison, but nevertheless a lack of Australian studies has been conducted on this demographic.

(c) Studies of fashion marketing in the literature have often focused on products and brands originating from the US (Kumar, Kim, and Pelton 2009; Lee et al. 2008; Knight and Kim 2007). Few studies have studied fashion marketing, specifically luxury brands, originating from Europe, which is seen by many as the fashion hub of the world. Future studies should compare cross-cultural brands with other forms of fashion products such as haute couture and accessories. This calls for more research into the consumption of other forms of fashion products.

(d) Previous studies that have examined the effect of uniqueness and status on the consumption of fashion products have always used generic fashion clothing rather than a particular brand or product (Park, Kim, and Forney 2006; Amaldoss and Jain 2005b; Chao and Schor 1998). The use of a particular brand or product might increase the involvement and reliability of the study and thus provide a more robust study of this avenue of consumption.

(e) The study of uniqueness and status in relation to luxury goods has been looked at, but not in a context where they are in direct relation to each other. Since uniqueness has been identified as a component of status, this calls for more research into the effects consumers' need for uniqueness has on luxury apparel brands and how this compares to status-seeking consumers (Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith 2007; O'Cass and McEwen

2004). This represents a gap in the research relating to these prevalent consumer behaviours.

2.7 Concluding Comments

This chapter discussed the relevant literature, findings and trends and placed them within the existing literature. By providing the established literature behind the current study, the aims and research propositions can be better understood. The following chapter explores the theoretical underpinnings of these key issues in more detail and develops hypotheses based on the gaps identified in the literature.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to develop a conceptual framework based on the research gaps highlighted in the literature review. The research objectives are discussed along with the theoretical background of the constructs. Then, the relevant literature is used to support the development of the research model and the hypothesised relationships.

3.2 Research Objectives and Questions

The primary objective is to assess how Australian Generation Y consumers' attitudes in relation to their need for unique luxury apparel products and brands may affect their purchase intentions. This helps highlight the attitudinal and behavioural variables marketers should consider when they introduce or market luxury fashion apparel. This research will allow marketers to achieve a better understanding of how consumers perceive and evaluate high-end luxury apparel brands. The research builds on previous research by Knight and Kim (2007), Ryan (2008) and Latter, Phau and Marchegiani (2010). The following research objectives are examined using both an established brand and a fictional brand in order to explore the following research objectives in a new light:

- To determine whether consumers' need for uniqueness affects and influences brand judgement and emotional value (H1).

- To determine whether status consumption affects and influences brand judgement and emotional value (H2).
- To determine whether brand judgement influences emotional value (H3).
- To determine whether brand judgement and emotional value influences purchase intention (H4).
- To determine whether consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption influences purchase intention (H5).
- To determine whether emotional value mediates purchase intention (H6/H8/H10).
- To determine whether brand judgement mediates purchase intention (H7/H9).

In particular, the study compares the effect of an established brand name with that of a fictional brand name on the brand perceptions (brand judgement and emotional value) and purchase intentions of a luxury apparel brand's ready-to-wear range. The inclusion of a fictional brand, which can be considered to be the equivalent of a brand that is simply unknown to consumers, allows for the comparison and generalisability of the results. The research questions therefore are as follows:

- Does familiarity with a brand influence brand judgement, emotional value and purchase intention in high-end luxury apparel?
- How does a fictitious brand compare with an established brand?

3.3 Theoretical Underpinnings and Hypothesis Development

This study is based chiefly on research by Knight and Kim (2007) and Ryan (2008). Several variables were found to have high significance in these studies and these have subsequently been retained and utilised for the purpose of this study. Two new variables, status

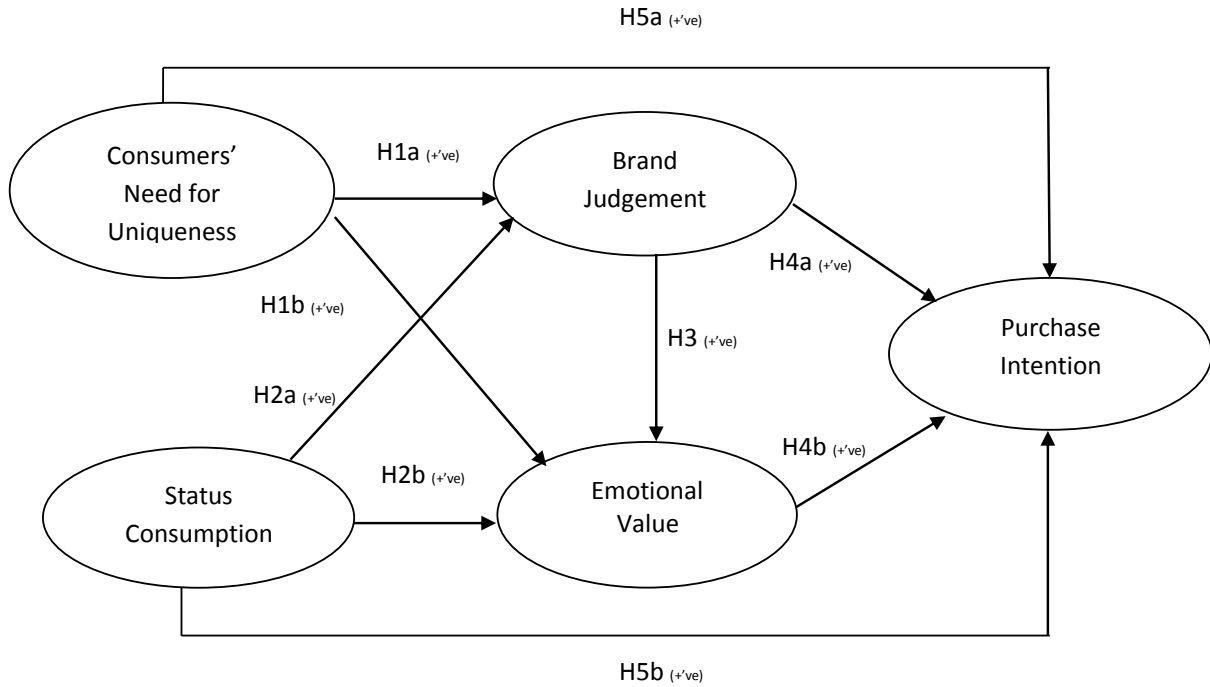
consumption and brand judgement, have been added to the study in order to address the gaps in the literature, as identified by Knight and Kim (2007). An haute couture luxury apparel brand has been chosen as a means for measuring the hypothesised relationships between the constructs.

The conceptual framework has been developed based on the constructs identified in Chapter 2. The aims of the framework are to measure how status consumption and consumers' need for uniqueness influence brand perceptions (brand judgement and emotional value) and how this affects consumers' purchase intentions of an established and a fictitious haute couture luxury apparel brand's ready-to-wear line.

Five key theories are relevant to this research: self-image congruity theory, consumers' need for uniqueness, status consumption theory, the theory of customer-based brand equity and the theory of planned behaviour. The following sections outline the variables and the underpinning theories.

Figure 3-0-1

Model diagrammatically depicting the proposed relationships between consumers' need for uniqueness, status consumption and purchase intention.



3.4 Self-Image Congruity Theory

When consumers purchase and consume a brand, they take into account both the functional and the psychological attributes. The functional attributes are concrete, tangible and observable, whereas the psychological attributes are abstract, intangible and not directly observable. Self-image congruity is used to look at the relationship between the consumer and the brand. Consumers take into account both the functional and the psychological attributes of the product/brand and consider how they fit with their own self-concepts (Chebat, Sirgy, and St-James 2006; Sirgy 1985, 1982). Studies have shown that congruence between self-image and brand image affects preference and thus purchase. Consumers select cues from the brand image and projected lifestyle, typical users of the brand and the brand's price point, and infer from these cues the overall image of the brand. Consumers then compare the brand image with their own self-images. The closer they perceive the brand to be to their own self-images, the higher is the likelihood of purchase. The theory of self-image congruity is used to understand and measure how individuals with varying levels of uniqueness and status view and measure brand perceptions (brand judgement and emotional value) and how this affects purchase.

There are four different self-image/product image congruity states:

1. Positive self-image congruity – occurs when the product matches one's actual and one's ideal self-image, which reinforces self-congruity motivation. This means that there is a low discrepancy between one's actual self-image and the product image and a low discrepancy between one's ideal self-image and the product image (Sirgy 1985). Motivation to purchase the brand and the associated clothing and accessories would be at its highest in this situation, as would consumer satisfaction. This motivation and resulting satisfaction stems from the consumer identifying with the selected product or brand, thus causing an

emotional state that affirms and reinforces both the self-esteem motive and the self-consistency motive.

2. Positive self-image incongruity – occurs when there is a high discrepancy between one's actual self-image and the product image, but a low discrepancy between one's ideal self-image and the product image. In this situation, the individual might be motivated to purchase the product/brand but his/her satisfaction level would be moderate (Sirgy 1985). This occurs because the purchase would enhance one's self-esteem motive; however, the self-esteem motive would conflict with his or her self-consistency motive.

3. Negative self-image congruity – occurs when there is a low discrepancy between one's actual self-image and the product image, but a high discrepancy between one's ideal self-image and the product image (Sirgy 1985). According to Chebat, Sirgy, and St-James (2006) and Hong and Zinkham (1995), consumers have a tendency to perceive themselves more favourably than in reality (this bias stems from the need for self-esteem). Consumers prefer to view themselves in a positive light because this boosts their levels of self-esteem. Therefore, the situation would again result in a moderate satisfaction level because the individual's self-consistency motive would conflict with his or her self-esteem motive.

4. Negative self-image incongruity – occurs when there exists a high discrepancy between one's actual self-image and the product image and high discrepancy between his or her ideal self-image and the product image (Sirgy 1985). The satisfaction level and motivation to purchase would be at its lowest because the purchase of the product serves no function to the maintenance of either the self-esteem or the self-consistency motives (Sirgy 1985).

These product image congruity states have profound implications in explaining how product necessity can dictate a consumer's willingness and motivation to purchase a luxury apparel item, as research shows that consumers can find it difficult to distinguish between their own feelings about a product or brand and that of how they perceive they will be viewed by others (Sirgy 1982).

The self-image or product image congruity theory in essence describes the effect of the cognitive matching process between the value-expressive attributes of a given product or brand and the consumer's self-concept of purchase decisions such as product preference, purchase intention, purchase behaviour, product satisfaction or dissatisfaction and product loyalty (Sirgy 1982). Self-image congruity theory underpins the constructs of the study, as it suggests that congruence between the self-concept image and product image is a determinant of product selection decisions, customer satisfaction and repurchase intention.

3.5 Consumers' Need for Uniqueness Theory

The theory of consumers' need for uniqueness is employed in the context of this study to explain how an individual's need for uniqueness might influence their brand responses. Consumers' need for uniqueness, stemmed from need for uniqueness introduced in 1977 by Snyder and Fromkin as a tool to measure abnormality in relation to others (Snyder and Fromkin 1977). The theory of consumers' need for uniqueness is used to understand and determine an individual's need to be different from others (Ryan 2008; Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001) through the pursuit of material goods (Knight and Kim 2007). Snyder and Fromkin (1977) found that it was logical to speculate about whether different people display varying degrees of need for uniqueness in similar circumstances and that this can have a

significant impact on their purchase decisions. Individuals with a high need for uniqueness tend to adopt new products and brands quicker, which is pertinent to the fashion industry where trends and styles are everchanging (Bertrandias and Goldsmith 2006).

According to this theoretical perspective, despite the influence of normative pressure, individuals seek differentiation (Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith 2007) and intentionally disregard prescribed social norms in order to distinguish themselves from the group (Snyder and Fromkin 1977). Individuals may engage in behaviours (the three behavioural manifestations of uniqueness discussed in the previous chapter) when they feel their self-perception of uniqueness being threatened. Unlike an individual driven by an independence motivation, in this need to feel different labelled counter-conformity (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001), the individual is exposed to a set of social norms and actively seeks differentiation through non-congruence (Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith 2007). The effect on the individual is ultimately dependent on the good becoming a publicly recognised symbol (Tian and McKenzie 2001). Because of its recognised meaning, these expressions of uniqueness are sought in different forms and through multiple outlets where the social penalties for being different are not severe. This makes the acquisition of material goods particularly valued (Ryan 2008; Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001; Snyder 1992). Since material goods have been identified as a good form of demonstrating differentiation, consumers' need for uniqueness has slowly gained popularity as a topic in the marketing discipline.

The consumption patterns of consumers with varying degrees of uniqueness have been widely studied and applied to a number of consumer goods. Understanding how the motivations behind individuals with a higher degree of need for uniqueness may differ in

their consumption patterns and avenues for purchase in relation to those individuals with lower degrees is a key area of interest, leading to the conclusion that need for uniqueness may be a determinant of product or style replacement behaviours consumers may adopt (Ryan 2008; Tian and McKenzie 2001). As mentioned earlier, the study of uniqueness on replacement behaviours can be applied to the fashion industry where styles and trends are constantly changing and updating (Bertrandias and Goldsmith 2006). It has been proposed and subsequently studied in previous research that uniqueness motivation can play an influential role in consumers' cognitive and emotional responses to products (Ryan 2008; Knight and Kim 2007).

3.6 Status Consumption Theory

Status consumption is a topic that has been extensively researched in the marketing discipline (Husic and Cicic 2009; Bertrandias and Goldsmith 2006; Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith 2007; Sangkhawasi and Johri 2007). Previous studies have found status consumption to be a highly motivating factor in a wide range of consumer behaviours (Eastman and Goldsmith 1999). This theory will support the antecedent construct status consumption in this study and how status consumption might influence consumers' brand responses.

Status consumption can be defined as “the motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the conspicuous consumption of consumer products that confer and symbolise status both for the individual and surrounding significant others” (Eastman and Goldsmith 1999, 42). Thus, an enduring individual trait, namely the consumption of status products, may aid the individual in their struggle for self-respect and social approval. Status-seeking consumers are concerned with what relevant groups consider

to be the best choices in order to gain group status (Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith 2007). The extent to which individuals seek status will influence the extent to which they display and engage in the consumption of status symbols (Eastman and Goldsmith 1999).

The theory of status consumption is used to understand and measure an individual's tendency to purchase goods and services for the status afforded by owning such products (Eastman and Goldsmith 1999). Independent of both income and social class, Mason (1992) found significant levels of status consumption in communities throughout the world where the usefulness of products was measured in terms of the social advantage their purchase offered. Veblen's (1994 [1899]) theory of conspicuous consumption was based upon the notion that those individuals who outwardly displayed wealth were rewarded with preferential treatment by social contacts. Although closely related to conspicuous consumption, the purchase of high priced products to display wealth (O'Cass and McEwen 2004), status consumption is more concerned with increasing the status of both the consumer and the surrounding significant others (Goldsmith and Clark 2008). Recent status consumption research supports Veblen's notion that adding to an individual's social networks largely determines status consumption, with status-conscious consumers more socially aware and more interested in social relationships.

As group membership is considered to be a necessity, seldom do consumers operate in social vacuums; instead, they compare themselves with reference groups when making decisions on product and brand choices. Status consumption thus relies on significant others. Consumers who use consumption to achieve status are constrained by status norms operating within the group. Put simply, for a product or brand to infer status it must be viewed by the group as prestigious in order for it to convey the desired meaning, and elevate the individual's status

within the group (Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith 2007). Accordingly, the status-seeking individual will choose products and brands that do not violate these ascribed group norms.

Mason (1992) identified a clear distinction in consumers, namely the aspiration to seek status through consumption as opposed to the ability to do so, which according to Veblen (1994 [1899]) “if these articles of consumption are costly, they are felt to be more noble and honorific”. Status-seeking consumers overlook the excessive nature of status products because of the honour these products intrinsically hold and the reputability associated with ownership. In other words, “the consumption of luxuries, in the true sense, is a consumption directed to the comfort of the consumer himself” (Veblen 1994 [1899], 45) and the resulting ‘external effects’ the consumption has on others (Mason 1992). Contrary to popular research that price enhances utility or directly affects utility, Veblen proposed individuals crave status, and that status is enhanced by material displays of wealth. Veblen split status consumers into two distinct groups ‘invidious comparison’ and ‘pecuniary emulation’. The first refers to members of a higher class who consume to distinguish themselves as part of the elite, whereas the second refers to members of a lower class who consume conspicuously so they will be thought of as a member of the elite. In modern terms, this represents the voluntary nature of consumers incurring higher costs for a functionally equivalent good to maintain differentiation, knowing that these costs should be large enough to discourage imitation (Bagwell and Bernheim 1996). Consumers from a lower class recognise this notion and as a result conspicuously purchase in order to appear from the aforementioned class.

This has given us the impetus to study the relationship between status consumption, on one hand, and brand judgement and emotional value, on the other, and to investigate how this may ultimately affect purchase behaviour.

3.7 Theory of Customer-Based Brand Equity

Customer-based brand equity is employed in this study to explain how brand responses pertaining to brand judgement and emotional value may affect the purchasing behaviours of consumers towards luxury apparel brands.

Customer-based brand equity is the study of brand equity from the perspective of the individual consumer and it is defined as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand” (Keller 1993, 1). Customer-based brand equity looks at the fact that different outcomes result from the marketing of a product because of its brand name in comparison to a product lacking brand identification (Jung and Sung 2008). The concept behind customer-based brand equity is to allow businesses to improve their marketing productivity, with a focus on the value created by marketing activities as perceived by the consumer (Pappu, Quester, and Cooksey 2005). Customer-based brand equity occurs when the individual consumer has some familiarity with the brand and as a consequence holds a strong favourable view of its brand associations. It plays a major role in brand-related consumer learning and subsequent recall (Keller 1993). According to Supphellen (2000), the major purpose of branding is to create and achieve customer-based brand equity. Brand equity can bring several advantages to the business; high brand equity levels are said to equate to a higher level of consumer preference, thus resulting in purchase along with high stock returns (Pappu, Quester, and Cooksey 2005).

As customer-based brand equity occurs when a consumer is familiar with the brand, it is critical to look at brand knowledge. Brand knowledge consists of two components: brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness relates to the consumer being able to recall or recognise the brand, while brand image relates to associations that the brand makes (Keller

1993) or more simply the meaning of the brand to consumers (Pappu, Quester, and Cooksey 2005). For low involvement purchase decisions, brand awareness alone is enough to create a favourable consumer response; however, in most cases “the strength, favourability and uniqueness of brand associations play a critical role in determining the differential response that makes up brand equity” (Keller 2008, 53). If consumers perceive the brand as only representative of the product category, then they will respond as if the product was unbranded (Keller 2008). Brand associations play a major role in consumers favouring one brand over another based on the recall of brand information (Jung and Sung 2008; Keller 1993). Previous studies have found that brand equity is related to high brand preference and purchase intention. Furthermore, Aaker (1991) suggested that brand associations provide value to the consumer and thus they provide consumers with a reason to buy the brand. They also provide a foundation for brand loyalty.

Brand associations, as defined by Aaker (1991, 109), are “anything ‘linked’ in memory to a brand”. In addition to those discussed earlier, brand associations also provide value to the brand, thereby helping process and retrieve information, differentiate the brand, create positive attitudes and feelings and provide a basis for extensions. In a fashion context, various brands are not distinguishable to most consumers; therefore, the associations of the brand name can play a critical role in separating one brand from another. Some associations influence purchase decisions by providing credibility and confidence in the brand, lending credence to the product itself (Aaker 1991).

Some brand associations become entwined with and stimulate positive feelings that are transferred to the brand. The associations and their respective feelings then become inextricably linked to the brand and these can transform the use experience into something

different (Aaker 1991). The emotions evoked by a brand can become so strongly associated that they are accessible during product consumption or use (Keller 2008).

Once brand knowledge, awareness and image have been fulfilled, customer-based brand equity moves into brand resonance, which seeks to describe the relationship and the extent to which consumers feel they are 'in sync' with the brand. Brand resonance is characterised by the level of intensity and depth of the psychological bond consumers feel they have with the brand. Resonance requires a strong personal attachment, which goes beyond having a favourable attitude towards the brand and extends to viewing the brand as something special in a broad context (Keller 2008). Simply put, brand resonance reflects "a completely harmonious relationship between customers and the brand" (Keller 2001, 19).

From the relationships proposed between these three dimensions of customer-based brand equity, namely brand image, brand knowledge and brand resonance, this theory provides the drive to study the relationship that brand judgement has with emotional value and to investigate how this may affect purchase behaviour. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H1a: Consumers' need for uniqueness significantly and positively influences brand judgement.

H1b: Consumers' need for uniqueness significantly and positively influences emotional value.

H2a: Status consumption significantly and positively influences brand judgement.

H2b: Status consumption significantly and positively influences emotional value.

H3: Brand judgement significantly and positively influences emotional value.

3.8 Theories on Purchasing Behaviour

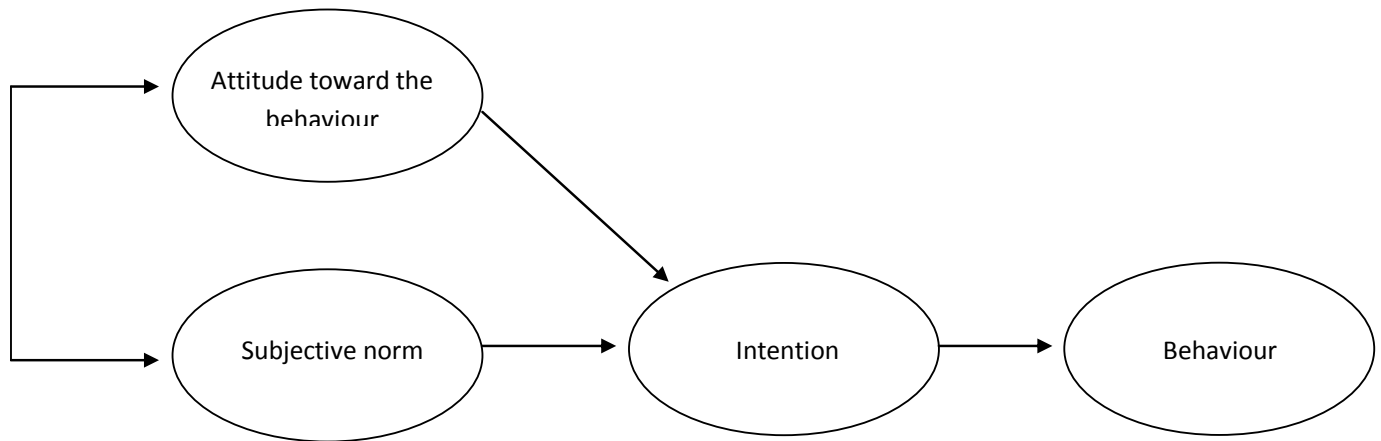
The theory of reasoned action popularised by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) offers a clearly defined structure that allows the investigation of how attitudes, personal and cultural determinants and volitional control influence a consumer's intentions or willingness to purchase a given product or brand, as diagrammatically displayed in Figure 3-0-2. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) claimed that “a person's behaviour is determined by his or her intention to perform the behaviour and that this intention is, in turn, a function of his or her attitude toward the behaviour and his or her subjective norm”. Therefore, the theory highlights that the best predictor of behaviour is ‘intention’.

The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen 1991) is used in this study to underpin consumers' willingness or intentions to purchase a luxury apparel brand. Figure 3-0-3 extends the theory of reasoned action by including “perceived behavioural control as a determinant of both behavioural intention and behaviour, especially for circumstances in which there were constraints on action” (Belleau et al. 2007, 246).

Figure 3-0-2

Theory of reasoned action

Adapted from Ajzen and Madden (1985)

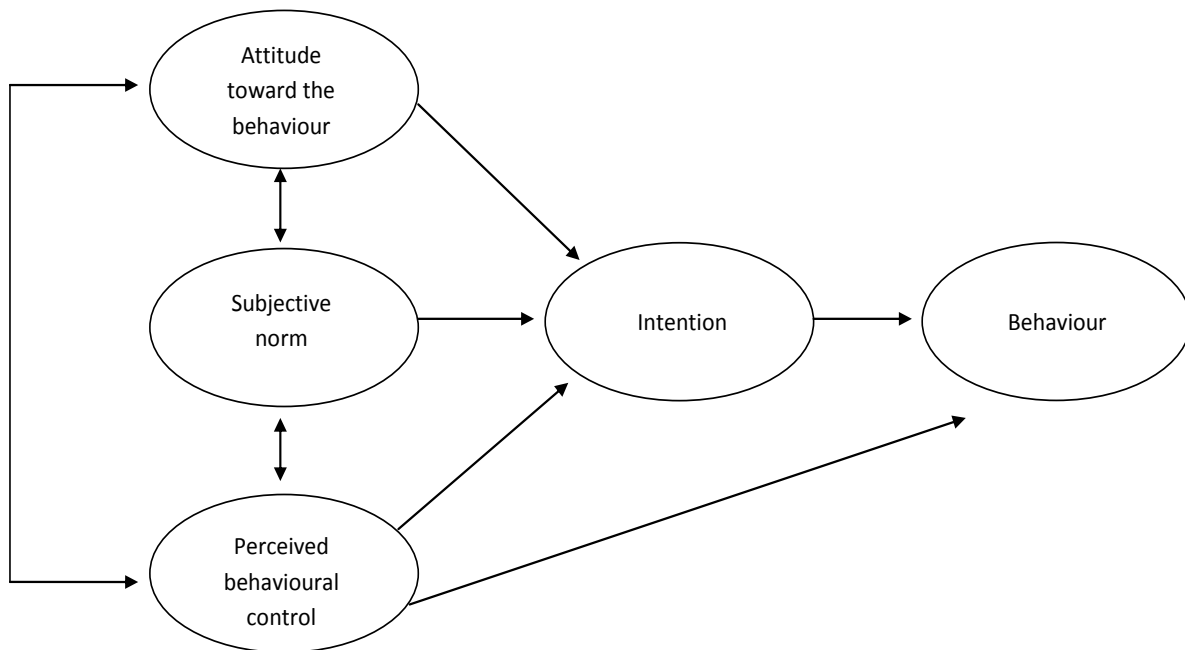


In the theory of reasoned action, a person's attitude towards a specific behaviour consists of a belief that a particular behaviour leads to a certain outcome and an evaluation of the outcome of that behaviour. When the outcome seems to be beneficial, the individual may then intend to perform that particular behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). However, it must be noted that an individual's intention to perform a given behaviour can also be based upon their desire to comply with the behaviours of others. The stronger the intention the greater likelihood the behaviour will be performed (Ajzen and Madden 1985). The theory of planned behaviour comprises three conceptually independent determinates of intention, as shown in Figure 3-0-3.

Figure 3-0-3

Theory of planned behaviour

Adapted from Ajzen (1991)



In the theory of planned behaviour, perceived behavioural control is included as an exogenous variable. Perceived behavioural control has both a direct effect on behaviour and an indirect effect on behaviour through intentions. The addition of perceived behavioural control has, according to research conducted by Ajzen (1991), led to considerable improvements in the prediction of intentions. The indirect effect of perceived behavioural control is based upon the assumption that this construct has motivational implications for behavioural intentions (Madden and Ajzen 1992). This means that individuals who believe they lack the necessary resources or opportunities to perform a particular behaviour are unlikely to form strong behavioural intentions despite the fact their attitudes and subjective norms may be favourable. The empirical evidence provided by Bandura et al. (1980) indicates that people's behaviour is strongly influenced by the confidence they have in their

ability to perform it. “The structural link from perceived behavioural control to intentions reflects the motivational influence of control on behaviour through intentions” (Madden and Ajzen 1992, 4).

Other important constructs used in the study are defined below.

Attitude towards the behaviour: “The degree to which a person has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation or appraisal of the behaviour in question” (Ajzen 1991, 188).

Subjective norm: The perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behaviour. The strength of each normative belief is weighted by the motivation to comply with the referent in question.

Perceived behavioural control: Included as an exogenous variable. This refers to consumers’ perceptions of their abilities to perform a given behaviour. Perceived behavioural control can in conjunction with intention be used to predict behaviour in order to moderate the effect of intention on behaviour.

Intention: An indication of a person’s readiness to perform a given behaviour. The antecedent constructs attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control all filter into intention to determine behaviour.

Behaviour: The observable response in a given situation. For the purpose of this study, the participant’s intention to purchase a selected luxury apparel brand is deemed the behaviour.

Individuals tend to select tasks and activities in which they feel competent and confident and avoid those in which they do not. Previous research has concluded that there is a high degree of correlation between brand responses (attitude towards the brand) and purchase intentions (behavioural intentions) (Knight and Kim 2007). Research also indicates that purchase intention is a positive consequence of emotional value in relation to both brand responses and indirectly for consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption (Lee et al. 2008; Knight and Kim 2007). Therefore, when consumers believe their actions will have the desired consequences, they have the added incentive to engage in those actions.

In this study, the relationship between purchase intention and brand perceptions (brand judgement and emotional value) is examined in relation to the theory of planned behaviour. Behavioural intention relates to the purchase intentions of consumers towards a luxury apparel brand and attitude towards the brand relates to the brand responses that a consumer has to the brand. Subjective norms therefore relate to consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption, as they are both underpinned by an individual's perception of the social pressure surrounding their choices. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H4a: Consumers' perceptions of the judgements of a brand significantly and positively influence purchase intention.

H4b: Consumers' brand perceptions of emotional value significantly and positively influence purchase intention.

H5a: Consumers' need for uniqueness significantly and positively influences purchase intention.

H5b: Status consumption significantly and positively influences purchase intention.

All hypotheses developed to this point only test and measure casual relationships. Based on the existent literature and theory, the following mediations are proposed:

H6: Emotional value mediates the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention.

H7: Brand judgement mediates the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention.

H8: Emotional value mediates the relationship between brand judgement and purchase intention.

H9: Emotional value mediates the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention.

H10: Brand judgement mediates the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention.

3.9 Hypotheses Summarised

The relevant theories have now been discussed in accordance with their respective hypotheses. The summary below provides all the discussed hypotheses:

H1a: Consumers' need for uniqueness significantly and positively influences brand judgement.

H1b: Consumers' need for uniqueness significantly and positively influences emotional value.

H2a: Status consumption significantly and positively influences brand judgement.

H2b: Status consumption significantly and positively influences emotional value.

H3: Brand judgement significantly and positively influences emotional value.

H4a: Consumers' perceptions of the judgements of a brand significantly and positively influence purchase intention.

H4b: Consumers' brand perceptions of emotional value significantly and positively influence purchase intention.

H5a: Consumers' need for uniqueness significantly and positively influences purchase intention.

H5b: Status consumption significantly and positively influences purchase intention.

H6: Emotional value mediates the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention.

H7: Brand judgement mediates the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention.

H8: Emotional value mediates the relationship between brand judgement and purchase intention.

H9: Emotional value mediates the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention.

H10: Brand judgement mediates the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention.

Keller's (1993) theory of customer-based brand equity is underpinned by the notion that different outcomes result from the marketing of a product because of its brand name in comparison to a product lacking brand identification. This study utilises the same model and constructs to examine the effects of a fictitious haute couture brand in comparison to an established haute couture brand in order to ascertain the extent to which status- and uniqueness-seeking consumers are influenced by brand name alone.

3.10 Concluding Comments

The conceptual framework and relevant hypotheses have been addressed in the current chapter. Furthermore, relevant theories have been discussed and the positions of these theories within the existing literature established. A greater understanding of the research aims and propositions have been gained by providing the theoretical reasoning behind this study. In addition, by listing the individual hypotheses and specific research objectives a sound understanding of the research purpose has been attained. The theoretical basis is further built upon in the following chapter, which discusses the methodological design of the study.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used throughout the study. It begins with an explanation of the research design and the measures used along with the instrument and stimulus development. Then, data collection procedures, the sample and the sampling method are discussed. Finally, the techniques of analysis are described.

4.2 Research Design

The present study extends the research conducted previously by Knight and Kim (2007), Ryan (2008) O’Cass and Choy (2008) and Latter, Phau and Marchegiani (2010). The research is based on two distinct conditions: condition one – a fictitious luxury apparel brand – and condition two – an established luxury apparel brand. Clothing was chosen as the product category as this will allow for a comparison with the original studies with regard to changes incorporated in order to address the gaps identified in the literature.

The research design revolved around a self-administered questionnaire developed for the purpose of this study (see Appendix A). First, the questionnaire examined the relationship between the antecedent constructs consumers’ need for uniqueness/status consumption and brand perceptions (brand judgement and emotional value). Second, the relationship between brand judgement and emotional value was examined. Third, the direct relationship among all antecedent variables in relation to purchase intention was examined. The final evaluation was

to test whether brand perception played a mediating role in consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption towards purchase intention. A breakdown of the questionnaire design follows.

4.3 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire and stimulus for conditions one and two are available in Appendix A. The purpose of the survey instrument was to test the 10 formulated research hypotheses and two research questions. It is crucial that the questionnaire adequately and accurately measures the constructs that were specified and used in formulating the hypotheses (Chapter 3).

The questionnaire comprises three parts with five established scales. The first part of this survey (Part A) combined consumers' need for uniqueness (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001) with status consumption (Eastman and Goldsmith 1999). The second part of the survey (Part B) measured brand judgement (Keller 2008), emotional value (Sweeney and Soutar 2001) and purchase intention (Bower and Landreth 2001; Baker and Churchill 1977) after exposure to a four-page full colour print stimulus under one of two conditions fictitious brand and established brand. Each respondent was exposed only to one condition to avoid the likelihood of revelation and confusion. The third and final part of the survey (Part C) captured demographic information. All scales were measured via statements on a seven-point Likert scales.

4.3.1 Scales and Measurements

Existing scales with strong reliabilities were used to measure the five main constructs on a seven-point scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. The measures and

reliability scores are summarised in Table 4-0-1, and a brief discussion of the measures follows.

Table 4-0-1

Scale items

| Scale and Source | Sample Items | Reliability |
|---|--|---|
| Consumers' need for uniqueness (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001) | I often dress unconventionally even when it's likely to offend others. I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by buying special clothing brands. I dislike clothing brands that are commonly purchased by everyone. | Avoidance of similarity $\alpha = 0.70$ Unpopular choice $\alpha = 0.62$ Creative choice $\alpha = 0.72$ |
| Status consumption (Eastman and Goldsmith 1999) | I would buy a brand just because it has status. I would pay more for a brand if it had status. I am interested in new brands with status. The status of a brand is irrelevant to me (R). | $\alpha = 0.70$ |
| Brand judgement (Keller 2008) | I have a strong overall opinion of (brand). (Brand) produces high quality products. The makers of (brand) are knowledgeable in their field of work. | N/A |
| Emotional value (Sweeney and Soutar 2001) | (Brand) is a brand I would enjoy. (Brand) makes me want to use it. I would feel relaxed about wearing (brand). | $\alpha = 0.94$ |
| Purchase intention (Baker and Churchill 1977; Bower and Landreth 2001) | I intend to try (brand). I would buy (brand) if I happened to see it in a store. I would buy (brand). I plan on buying (brand). I would shop at (brand). | Baker and Churchill (1977) $\alpha = 0.82$ Bower and Landreth (2001) $\alpha = 0.90$ |

4.4 Survey Instrument

The first part of the survey instrument combined consumer's need for uniqueness and status consumption. The instruments used to measure these constructs are discussed next.

4.4.1 Part A

4.4.2 Consumers' Need for Uniqueness

Consumers' need for uniqueness is measured using the 31-item scale developed by Tian, Bearden and Hunter (2001). This scale measures the extent to which consumers use products and brands (in this case fashion apparel) to differentiate themselves from others and from societal norms in general (Knight and Kim 2007; Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001). A higher score indicates a greater need for uniqueness.

The consumers' need for uniqueness scale comprises three dimensions: creative choice counter-conformity, unpopular choice counter-conformity and avoidance of similarity. Reliability and validity were both established and confirmed by its authors in a number of studies, as displayed in Table 4-0-1 (Tian and McKenzie 2001; Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001). To adapt the scale for the purpose of this study, the word 'product' was replaced with 'clothing' or 'clothing brand'. One item was very similar in meaning and wording and as a result was deleted. This was also removed as participants can become impatient when answering multiple questions of a similar nature (Karpova 2005).

4.4.3 Status Consumption

Status consumption is measured using Eastman and Goldsmith's (1999) status consumption scale. "The scale measures the extent to which individuals strive to improve their social status through consumption of consumer products that confer status both to the individual and to surrounding significant others" (Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith 2007, 47). It has five Likert-type items (one item reverse coded) and it is rated on a seven-point scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

4.5 Part B

4.5.1 Brand Judgement

The second part of the survey instrument measured brand judgement using 17 items from the 20-item scale developed by Keller (2008). Three items were removed to match the scale items used by Ryan (2008) and Latter, Phau and Marchegiani (2010). The scale measures the individual's personal opinions and evaluations of a brand, which are formed through brand performance, imagery and associations.

The brand judgement scale comprises four dimensions: brand quality, brand credibility, brand consideration and brand superiority. This scale is relatively new, and as such it has not been used in subsequent research. As indicated previously, the choice of this scale also reflects the replication of the study undertaken by Ryan (2008) and Latter, Phau and Marchegiani (2010). To adapt the scale for the purpose of this study, the word 'brand' was replaced with 'Benedicte Caravaggio' for condition one and 'Christian Dior' for condition two, and 'your' was replaced with 'my'.

4.5.2 Emotional Value

Emotional value was measured with a five-item subset from Sweeney and Soutar's (2001) 19-item perceived value scale. This scale measures "the utility derived from the feelings or affective states that a product generates" (Sweeney and Soutar 2001, 211). To adapt the scale for the purpose of this study, the brands 'Christian Dior' or 'Benedicte Caravaggio' were incorporated.

4.5.3 Purchase Intention

Two scales were used to identify purchase intention. The first, a three-item subset of the six-item scale developed by Bower and Landreth (2001), measured participants' intentions to try the brand, their intentions to buy and how eager they were to investigate the brand. Bower (2001) showed how unlikely university students are to develop a true purchase intention of a product from a single exposure to the brand; consequently, two of the three items reflect participants intentions and movements towards the product rather than pure purchase intentions.

The second measure of purchase intention, a three-item subset of a four-item scale, was developed by Baker and Churchill (1977). It measures the conative dimension of attitude towards the brand and, in turn, the behavioural intentions towards the brand. Combined, the two scales provide a rich measure of purchase intention.

4.6 Part C

4.6.1 Demographics

The final section of the questionnaire asked participants to provide age, gender, nationality, income details and the purchase habits of clothing and accessories. The use of this information and the findings of the tests are described in Chapter 5. Demographic questions were designed to be in the last section so that participants who have already partially completed the questionnaire would be more inclined to provide their personal details in order to conclude the process (Boyce 2005).

4.7 Stimulus

A stimulus was used in the questionnaire as a way to gauge participants' attitudes towards a unique fashion brand. Christian Dior was chosen because of its status in the haute couture market, its familiarity to the sample and its high level of exclusivity and thus uniqueness. The stimulus consisted of a four-page full colour booklet created by the researcher (Appendix A). This booklet was provided as a separate component to the questionnaire. A copy was developed based on the researcher's notion and industry examples of haute couture and combined with appropriately styled logos in accordance with the two conditions. Both conditions featured identical images of Christian Dior haute couture; however, condition one featured the stylised logo of fictitious brand 'Benedicte Caravaggio', while condition two featured the 'Christian Dior' logo.

4.7.1.1 Pre-tests of Stimulus

Pre-testing was conducted through an in-depth interview with an expert panel consisting of academic researchers and industry professionals. The stimulus was shown to the panel and all aspects of the stimulus were then discussed. The panel during the first pre-test revealed some insightful comments on improvements that could be made to both the picture and copy components of the stimulus. These included picture choice (one member felt the pictures did not adequately represent haute couture) and layout choice (the logos were not prominent enough). After this session, the stimulus was altered to incorporate changes and was tested for a second time. The second test revealed a much more positive response. From the panel's feedback, the stimulus was revealed to succeed in adequately representing haute couture and the overall layout and positioning of the logo was endorsed.

4.7.1.2 Pre-tests of Fictitious Brand Name

As with the stimulus pre-testing, pre-testing for the fictitious brand name was conducted through an in-depth interview with an expert panel. Phase 1 was conducted with academic researchers and phase 2 with industry professionals. A selection of possible brand names, in logo format, was shown to academic researchers and all aspects of the possible brands/logos were then discussed. The academic panel narrowed the selection based on aesthetic and verbal connotations of the brands/logo and suggested adjustments were made. After this session, the brands/logos were altered to incorporate the suggested changes.

Phase 2 was conducted with industry professionals to determine the most appropriate logo/brand name that coincided with industry standards. Upon mutual agreement from the panel, Benedicte Caravaggio was chosen as the brand/logo that succeeded in adequately representing an established haute couture brand.

4.8 Data Collection Procedure

The self-administered questionnaire developed for the study utilised a non-probability convenience sample. The survey instrument took approximately 10 minutes to complete and consisted of a self-administered pen and paper questionnaire and a separate stimulus containing images of Christian Dior haute couture, which can be seen in full in Appendix A.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions: fictitious (condition one – Benedicte Caravaggio) or established (condition two – Christian Dior). Condition one contained 261 undergraduate students and condition two contained 257 undergraduate students. All data were collected at a large university in Western Australia and analysed by the researcher. A total of 535 participants from the university completed self-administered

questionnaires during scheduled classes. The researcher contacted the tutor to obtain permission prior to conducting the survey. Participants were first introduced to the researcher by their tutor. After this time, the researcher briefed potential participants on their right to anonymity and other ethics-related matters, such as the right to discontinue at any time without prejudice. The researcher then briefed participants on haute couture and its position in the fashion landscape. Next, participants each received a questionnaire and a separate stimulus from their assigned condition and were instructed to leave the stimulus face down until they had reached question two. Participants were able to complete this task at their own pace. The true intention of the study was not initially revealed, and thus each group was only exposed to their assigned conditions to reduce the likelihood of confusion or revelations about the purpose of the study. Once participants had completed the questionnaire, the researcher collected all materials. Participants were then debriefed and thanked for their time and effort; any questions that would not affect the study were answered.

Data collection was conducted during August and September 2009 within a four-week period and April and May 2010 within a four-week period. The university ethics committee prior to administration cleared the survey and stimulus (see Appendix B). No incentives for completion were given to participants. The researcher was personally responsible for administering all questionnaires to ensure the same procedure was followed throughout the data collection process.

4.9 Sampling Method

The methods used for sampling and data collection have various advantages. Although the results of convenience sampling in general may limit the generalisability or

representativeness of findings (Malhotra et al. 1996), it is still the most useful sampling method for this particular study because it allows information to be gathered in a quick and efficient manner while still providing significant insights (Workman and Kidd 2000). In addition, this method was chosen because of the imposed time limitations and nature of the study.

4.10 Sample

Undergraduate university students formed the sample in this study. This segment of the population was chosen not only for convenience but also for several other important reasons. First, a high proportion of students fall into the Generation Y age bracket, born from 1977 to 1991 (Khoo and Conisbee 2008), where they purchase brands and products as a means of expressing their individuality and status (Piacentini and Mailer 2004). Second, according to Khoo and Conisbee (2008), they form the potential bulk of consumers for luxury products. Third, university students represent a significant avenue of potential growth because of their current and potential future spending power and subsequent interest in shopping coupled with their desire for uniqueness (Nobel, Haytko, and Phillips 2009; Goldsmith and Clark 2008; Khoo and Conisbee 2008; Phau and Leng 2008; O'Cass and Frost 2002; Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001). Fourth, the choice of students also reflects the replication of the studies conducted by Knight and Kim (2007), Ryan (2008) and (Latter, Phau, and Marchegiani 2010) and helps explore the gap in Australian research in this area. Lastly, students are easily accessible, available at a relatively low cost, follow instructions well, are representative of other consumers and are generally cooperative (Yavas 1994). Thus, the use of a student sample is justified for this study based on the nature of the research objectives.

Participants for the study were drawn from students enrolled at a large metropolitan university in Western Australia that specialises in educating students in a number of different disciplines. To ensure the sample population would not come from a single discipline and result in a biased selection, surveys were administered in four different schools/departments: The School of Marketing, The School of Management, The School of Engineering and The School of Media Society and Culture. Each of these schools is considered to be a large division in its own right.

Owing to the exploratory nature of the study, the size of the non-probability sample was proposed to range between 200 and 250 participants for each of the conditions. In accordance with previous research conducted by O'Cass and Choy (2008), Ryan (2008) and Tian, Bearden and Hunter (2001), this was considered to be sufficient. The proposed sample size is considered to be satisfactory for major statistical analysis techniques (Coakes 2005).

4.10.1 Screening Questions

This survey was preceded by a cover letter outlining the purpose of the study. Condition one was also required to answer three screening questions. The screening questions are particularly important for this study, as it requires participants with 'expert' knowledge on the subject to be discarded. Therefore, screening question one (verbally asked by the researcher when briefing participants) ensures that participants cannot identify Christian Dior haute couture from design and aesthetic alone, which would hamper their ability to objectively view the stimulus and thus bias the results.

The second question asks participants to indicate their knowledge of haute couture prior to today on a seven-point scale ranging from 'no knowledge' to 'strong knowledge'. This

question was preceded with a definition of haute couture and ready to wear. Since this research is based on brand judgement, it requires participants who are self-proclaimed ‘experts’ to be discarded in order to limit the possible bias that may occur.

Question three in conjunction with question two allows respondents who are self-proclaimed experts to be screened and discarded. The question asks participants if they recognise a list of designers, several of which are fictitious. Surveys marked high, at a level of 6 or 7 indicating strong knowledge in question two and correctly marked in question three were to be discarded. No surveys were discarded based on the results of these screening questions.

4.11 Data Analysis

Data analysis included two primary statistical techniques: exploratory factor analysis and regression analysis. To begin with, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine the underlying dimensions of the five constructs. Factor analysis is a data reduction technique used to reduce a large number of variables to a smaller set of underlying factors. These factors summarise the structure (Coakes 2005). Factor analysis is an extension of correlation analysis but instead of the relationship between two variables being tested, several are examined at the same time (Boyce 2005).

A number of measures need to be met in order to select the items and define the factor structure accurately: Eigenvalues must be greater than 1 to be considered significant, communalities must have a value greater than 0.5, Bartlett’s test of sphericity should be large and significant and the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) needs to be 0.6 or greater. Once the factor analysis has been conducted, a reliability test will be run

using Cronbach's alphas, and a value of 0.6 and greater will be accepted as reliable (Coakes 2005).

This will be followed by multiple and stepwise regression analyses to identify linkages between two or more independent variables and the dependent variable. Regression analysis is used to find out if a change in one variable will produce a change in the other (Boyce 2005). In this study, multiple and stepwise regressions are used to test the validity of the hypotheses identified in Chapter 3. According to Coakes (2005) in order for multiple regressions analysis to be conducted, tests for multicollinearity and high correlations among the independent variables are required to test the relationship among the variables.

The following assumptions are placed on the multiple and stepwise regression analysis: the variance inflation factor of the test should not exceed 10, a tolerance value close to 0 indicates that the variable is highly correlated with other variables and the condition index represents the amount of variance related to the Eigenvalue. The condition index usually has a value within the range of 15 to 30; a higher value shows there is a higher degree of multicollinearity. Collinearity is used to indicate the correlation coefficient; a value of 1 represents complete collinearity, while a value of 0 represents no collinearity (Boyce 2005; Coakes 2005).

Multiple regression analysis is also used to test for mediation, which examines the relationships between three variables. There can be three possible outcomes: full, partial or no mediation. Testing for mediation follows the four-step process explained and illustrated in Chapter 5. A Sobel test can reconfirm mediation and this will be conducted for each

mediation. A significant value of 0.05 or above indicates a full mediation, while 0.05 or below represents a partial mediation (Baron and Kenny 1986).

4.12 Concluding Comments

By describing and justifying each facet of the current study's methodology, the rigour and accuracy of the findings can be both understood and assured. It is upon this assurance of rigour that Chapter 5 discusses the data analysis and results of the research, and presents the findings drawn from this analysis.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the results of the study as per the developed hypotheses, beginning with the characteristics of participants, followed by descriptive analyses, factor analyses and reliability analyses. Multiple regression analyses are then shown, which test for any relationships between constructs as hypothesised in Chapter 3. The results are examined in groups of findings and discussed in accordance with the previous literature. The chapter concludes with a series of linear regression analyses that test the mediation effects in this study, with confirmation using Sobel tests. All analyses can be seen in full in Appendix C. All data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social SciencesTM (SPSS) version 17.0. A summary of the results can be seen at the end of Chapter 6.

5.2 Response Rate

A total of 535 questionnaires were administered. From these, 17 were rejected because of insufficient responses to the appropriate sections such as students returning a blank questionnaire in order to indicate that they did not wish to complete the survey. This left a useable total of 518 questionnaires.

5.3 Description of Sample

Table 5-0-1 describes the demographic profile of the study population. Of the total valid respondents (n = 518), 260 were male and 258 were female. The majority of respondents were aged between 18 and 21 (64.9%) and a large number of respondents (73.9%) have an annual income of under \$20,000. Although this demographic profile differs from what one might consider to be a representative cross-section of Australian Generation Y consumers, the age range and variation in income associated with young Australian consumers suggests that it is representative of the population of interest. With a focus on Generation Y consumers, this study is similar to many others in its use of students (Lee et al. 2008; Park, Rabolt, and Jeon 2008; Ryan 2008; Knight and Kim 2007). Furthermore, Yavas (1994) proposes that student sampling can be representative of general consumers.

Table 5-0-1

Individual Respondent Demographics

| Profile | | N | % |
|----------------|--------------------|-----|------|
| Gender | Male | 260 | 50.2 |
| | Female | 258 | 49.8 |
| Age | 18–21 | 336 | 64.9 |
| | 22–25 | 150 | 29 |
| | 26–32 | 32 | 6.3 |
| Income (AUD\$) | Less than \$20,000 | 384 | 73.9 |
| | \$20,000–\$29,000 | 73 | 14.1 |
| | \$30,000–\$39,000 | 37 | 7.1 |
| | \$40,000 and above | 25 | 4.9 |

5.4 Descriptive Analyses

Descriptive analyses, as displayed in Table 5-0-2, were carried out on the purchase behaviours of the study population. In regards to the frequency of clothing purchased, the majority of respondents (28.6%) purchased clothing once a fortnight, with once a week to once every 2–3 months accounting for 94.6% of the total. An analysis of the amount respondents spent on an individual clothing item revealed that 63.9% spent below \$100 on a single item, 27.8% spent between \$101–\$200 with the remaining 8.3% spending \$201 and above. In regards to avenues of purchase, 57.5% purchased their clothing at a department store, followed by 49.4% at a specialty store and 39.4% at a boutique, with 18.3% of respondents indicating they had purchased clothing on the Internet. This supports the research (Knight and Kim 2007; Lynn and Harris 1997) that found that Generation Y consumers did not limit themselves to bricks and mortar stores and traditional avenues of purchase. The small percentage of respondents who had purchased on the Internet could relate to consumers of this age bracket that are conspicuously consuming or those that are reliant on normative influences when making socially risky purchases (Mason 1992; Snyder and Fromkin 1977).

Descriptive analyses were also carried out on the purchase behaviours of respondents in relation to their fashion accessories. The spread was found to be relatively even in frequency of purchase, with the majority of respondents purchasing between once a month to every 2–3 months (52.7%). Over 50% of respondents spent below \$100 on a single accessories item, 36.2% between \$101 and \$200 and the remaining 11.7% \$201 and above.

Table 5-0-2**Descriptive Statistics**

| Variables | | Frequency | Valid Percentage |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| How often do you purchase a new clothing item for yourself? | Once a week | 72 | 13.9 |
| | Once a fortnight | 148 | 28.6 |
| | Once a month | 130 | 25.1 |
| | Once every 2–3 months | 68 | 13.1 |
| | Once every 4–6 months | 26 | 5.0 |
| | Once every 6 months | 9 | 1.7 |
| | Once a year | 58 | 11.2 |
| | Other | 7 | 1.4 |
| On average, how much do you spend on a single piece of clothing? | Below \$100 | 331 | 63.9 |
| | \$101–\$200 | 144 | 27.8 |
| | \$201–\$300 | 30 | 5.8 |
| | \$301 and above | 13 | 2.5 |
| How often do you purchase new accessories for yourself? | Once a week | 21 | 4.1 |
| | Once a fortnight | 58 | 11.2 |
| | Once a month | 140 | 27.1 |
| | Once every 2–3 months | 132 | 25.6 |
| | Once every 4–6 months | 65 | 12.6 |
| | Once every 6 months | 40 | 7.8 |
| | Once a year | 50 | 9.7 |
| | Other | 10 | 1.9 |
| On average, how much do you spend on a single accessories item? | Below \$100 | 269 | 52.1 |
| | \$101–\$200 | 187 | 36.2 |
| | \$201–\$300 | 40 | 7.8 |
| | \$301 and above | 20 | 3.9 |

5.5 Factor Analysis

It was proposed in Chapter 4 that four constructs were hypothesised as antecedents of purchase intention for a luxury apparel brand. The items that measured the five constructs are also been in Table 4-0-1. The initial 63 items that represented these five constructs were analysed and tested using exploratory factor analysis to determine their factor structures and dimensionality. Reliability analyses were also carried out in this section.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the survey was divided into two sections. The first section was identical under both conditions and related to the consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption constructs. The second section examined brand perceptions (brand judgement and emotional value) and purchase intentions and thus it varied based on the exposed condition (condition one – fictitious 'Benedicte Caravaggio' – and condition two – established 'Christian Dior'). Logos and brand names were adjusted to measure the respective brands and thus the assigned conditions.

5.6 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was used to test for relationships between the constructs previously hypothesised in Chapter 3. Regression produces the best prediction of a dependent variable from several independent variables (Coakes 2005). In order to test all the hypotheses (H1 to H10), the use of linear regression, multiple regression, stepwise regression and hierarchical moderated regression analyses was essential to this task. To begin with, the results of each antecedent construct gathered from the factor analyses were used for multiple regression analyses. For this purpose, brand judgement and emotional value were modelled as dependent variables with consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption serving as predictor

variables. These analyses aim to examine the overall impact each construct has on the study and to test for significant relationships between the variables in order to confirm the hypotheses postulated. The second part consists of a simple linear regression analysis conducted between brand judgement, emotional value and purchase intention. Lastly, stepwise regression analysis allows for all antecedent variables to be entered at the same time, with the order and entry method determined by statistical criteria generated by the procedure itself, which allows for the removal of variables previously entered (Coakes 2005).

5.7 Mediation Analysis

In order to test for a full or partial mediation between three constructs a four-step series of linear regression analysis was carried out. The four steps in the linear regression as proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) are as follows:

Step 1: the independent variable (x) is regressed against the mediator (m) and must be significant for the equation to hold.

Step 2: the independent variable (x) is regressed against the dependent variable (y) and also must be significant for the equation to hold and progress to the next step.

Step 3: the mediator (m) is regressed against the dependent variable (y). The result must be significant, as with the previous two steps.

Step 4: if all subsequent steps have found a significant result, then both the independent variable (x) and the mediator (m) are regressed against the dependent variable (y). If both

variables are shown to be significant then a partial mediation is supported, if the independent variable (x) is found to be non-significant while the mediator (m) is still significant then a full mediation is supported.

5.7.1 Sobel Test

A Sobel test was used in order to reconfirm the results generated through the four-step process. The purpose of a Sobel test is to test whether a mediator carries the influence of an independent variable (x) to a dependent variable (y), as shown in Figure 5-0-1.

Figure 5-0-1 Sobel Test

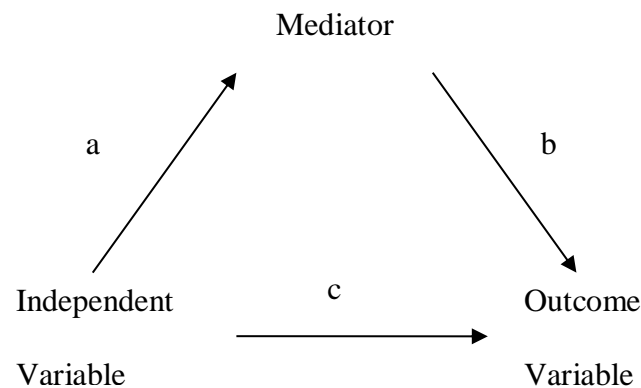
Adapted from Baron and Kenny (1986)

$$\sqrt{b^2 sa^2 + a^2 sb^2 + sa^2 sb^2}$$

Figure 5-0-2 shows the basic casual chain involved in mediation, which can be used to outline how the variables are generated for the Sobel test. The path from the independent variable to the mediator is represented by a and its standard error is sa, while the path from the mediator to the dependent variable is represented by b and its standard error is sb. These regression analyses are carried out with the resulting coefficients and standard errors entered into the equation as shown in Figure 5-0-1 and thus they produce an approximate significance test for the indirect effect of the independent (x) variable on the dependent variable (y) via the mediator (m) (Baron and Kenny 1986).

Figure 5-0-2

Adapted from Baron and Kenny (1986)



5.8 Factor Analyses

5.8.1 Factor Analysis for Consumers' Need for Uniqueness

The 30-item consumers' need for uniqueness scale was analysed through factor analysis using Varimax rotation, KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The 30 items initially explained 59.4% of the variance; this gave an Eigenvalue of 11.243, KMO of 0.951 and Bartlett's Sig. of 0.000. The initial 30 items were found to have five factors; however, owing to cross loading, these items were reduced so there would be minimal overlapping.

Six items were removed after further factor analysis, and the remaining 24 items were found to have three factors. These factors explained 56.6% of the variance. Factor 1 – creative choice counter-conformity – had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.910, factor 2 – avoidance of similarity – had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.903 and factor 3 – unpopular choice counter-conformity – had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.802. This left three distinct factors compared with Tian, Bearden and Hunter's (2001) original consumers' need for uniqueness scale. These 24 items yielded an Eigenvalue of 9.601, KMO of 0.948 and a Bartlett's Sig. of 0.000. This is presented in Table 5-0-3.

Table 5-0-3

Consumers' Need for Uniqueness Factor Analysis

| Key | | |
|------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Factor 1 | | Creative choice counter-conformity |
| Factor 2 | | Avoidance of similarity |
| Factor 3 | | Unpopular choice counter-conformity |

| Item | Loading | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|
| | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 |
| I'm often on the lookout for new clothing brands that will add to my uniqueness. | .781 | | |
| The clothing brands I like best are the ones that express my individuality. | .764 | | |
| I think of the clothing and accessories I buy in terms of how I can use them to shape a more personal image. | .760 | | |
| An important goal when buying clothing is to find something that communicates my uniqueness. | .725 | | |
| Having an eye for clothing that is interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image. | .715 | | |
| I look for one-of-a-kind clothes to create my own style. | .680 | | |
| I combine clothing items to create a personal image that cannot be duplicated. | .678 | | |
| I often try to find a more interesting version of clothing because I enjoy being original. | .672 | | |
| I have purchase unusual clothing brands as a way to create a more distinct personal image. | .569 | | |
| I dislike clothing brands that are commonly purchased by everyone. | | .771 | |
| I often try to avoid clothing brands that I know are bought by the general population. | | .753 | |
| I give up wearing clothing brands I've purchased once they become popular among the general public. | | .726 | |
| When a brand of clothing I own becomes too common, I usually stop wearing it. | | .715 | |
| When a brand of clothing I like becomes extremely popular, I lose interest. | | .711 | |
| I avoid clothing brands that have already been accepted and purchased by the average consumer. | | .671 | |
| The more common a clothing brand is among the general public, the less interested I am in buying it. | | .660 | |
| Brands do not hold much value for me when they are purchased by everyone. | | .650 | |
| When a clothing brand becomes too popular, I wear it less. | | .636 | |
| I have sometimes dared to be different in a way others are likely to disapprove. | | | .701 |
| If someone hinted I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner. | | | .687 |
| I have often broken the understood rules of my social group regarding what clothing brands to buy or own. | | | .670 |
| When it comes to the clothing I buy and the situations in which I use them, I have often broken customs and rules. | | | .654 |
| I often dress unconventionally even when it is likely to offend others. | | | .648 |
| I enjoy challenging the prevailing taste of people I know by buying something they wouldn't accept. | | | .631 |
| Cronbach's alpha | .910 | .903 | .802 |
| Eigenvalues | 9.601 | 2.081 | 1.893 |
| KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy | .948 | | |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Significance | .000 | | |

5.8.2 Factor Analysis for Status Consumption

The five-item scale that represented status consumption was analysed through factor analysis, with the selection of Varimax rotation, the KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity to provide a factor structure. The significance of Bartlett's test of sphericity was 0.000 and the KMO value resulted in a score of 0.821, which exceeds the requirement of 0.60, thus meeting the assumption of factorability (Coakes 2005). As derived from Table 5-0-4, one main factor accounted for this construct. The five items of the unidimensional status consumption scale accounted for 56.5% of the variance using factor loadings greater than 0.30, a Cronbach's alpha of 0.806 and an Eigenvalue of 2.825.

The results indicated that the independent status consumption construct was categorised into a one computable factor with substantial significance akin to the original Eastman and Goldsmith (1999) status consumption scale. Further, the five items derived from this unidimensional scale had well-established reliability scores.

Table 5- 0-4

Status Consumption Factor Analysis

| Item | Loading |
|---|----------------|
| I would pay more for a brand if it had status. | .860 |
| I am interested in new brands with status. | .770 |
| I would buy a brand just because it has status. | .766 |
| The status of a brand is irrelevant to me. | .683 |
| A brand is more valuable to me if it has snob appeal. | .662 |
| Cronbach's alpha | .806 |
| Eigenvalue | 2.825 |
| KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy | .821 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Significance | .000 |

5.8.3 Factor Analysis for Brand Judgement

The 17 items that represented the brand judgement construct were analysed through factor analysis using Varimax rotation, KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity.

5.8.4 Condition One – Fictitious

The 17 items initially explained 61.9% of the variance; this gave an Eigenvalue of 6.920, KMO of 0.899 and a Bartlett's Sig. of 0.000. The initial 17 items were found to have three factors; however, owing to cross loading greater than 0.30, the items were reduced further so there would be minimal overlapping (Coakes 2005).

Six items were eliminated after further factor analysis. The remaining 11 items were found to have three factors (Table 5-0-5). Factor one 'understanding' ($\alpha = 0.89$) includes items that take into account how the individual respondent feels the brand considers their feelings. Factor two 'attributes' ($\alpha = 0.72$) refers to what are considered to be the distinguishing characteristics of the brand. Factor three 'reputation' ($\alpha = 0.70$) includes items that relate to the respondent's opinion of the brand. These factors explain 67.8% of the variance with Cronbach's alphas above 0.70. These 11 items yielded an Eigenvalue of 4.307, a KMO of 0.841 and a Bartlett's Sig. of 0.000.

Table 5-0-5**Brand Judgement Factor Analysis (condition one)**

| Key | | |
|------------|--|---------------|
| Factor 1 | | Understanding |
| Factor 2 | | Attributes |
| Factor 3 | | Reputation |

| Item | Loading | | |
|--|----------------|----------|----------|
| | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 |
| The makers of Benedicte Caravaggio have my interests in mind. | .887 | | |
| The makers of Benedicte Caravaggio understand my needs. | .873 | | |
| The makers of Benedicte Caravaggio care about my opinions. | .829 | | |
| Benedicte Caravaggio is able to fully satisfy my needs. | .793 | | |
| Benedicte Caravaggio provides good value for money. | .702 | | |
| Benedicte Caravaggio is superior when compared to other couture brands. | | .790 | |
| Benedicte Caravaggio is a unique brand. | | .746 | |
| I admire Benedicte Caravaggio. | | .699 | |
| I have a strong overall opinion of Benedicte Caravaggio. | | .554 | |
| The makers of Benedicte Caravaggio are knowledgeable in their field of work. | | | .838 |
| Benedicte Caravaggio produces high quality products. | | | .832 |
| Cronbach's alpha | .885 | .716 | .701 |
| Eigenvalues | 4.307 | 2.150 | 1.000 |
| KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy | .841 | | |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Significance | .000 | | |

5.8.5 Condition Two – Established

The 17 items initially gave an Eigenvalue of 7.334, KMO of 0.906 and a Bartlett's Sig. of 0.000, and explained 67.2% of the variance. They were found to have four factors; however,

owing to cross loading greater than 0.30, the items were reduced further so there would be minimal overlapping (Coakes 2005).

Six items were eliminated after further factor analysis. The remaining 11 items were found to have two factors. These factors explain 58.5% of the variance with Cronbach's alphas of above 0.75. Factor one 'understanding' ($\alpha = 0.87$) features identical items to that of condition one and thus it is formed through items that take into account how the individual respondent feels the brand considers their feelings. Factor 2 'resonance' ($\alpha = 0.79$) is a combination of the items from attributes and reputation from condition one and thus it refers to the various characteristics involved in the comprehension of the brand. These 11 items yielded of an Eigenvalue of 4.566, a KMO of 0.836 and a Bartlett's Sig. of 0.000 (Table 5-0-6).

Table 5-0-6**Brand Judgement Factor Analysis (condition two)**

| Key | | |
|------------|--|---------------|
| Factor 1 | | Understanding |
| Factor 2 | | Resonance |

| Item | Loading | |
|--|----------------|----------|
| | Factor 1 | Factor 2 |
| The makers of Christian Dior care about my opinions. | .879 | |
| The makers of Christian Dior have my interests in mind. | .876 | |
| The makers of Christian Dior understand my needs. | .846 | |
| Christian Dior is able to fully satisfy my needs. | .731 | |
| Christian Dior provides good value for money. | .602 | |
| Christian Dior produces high quality products. | | .756 |
| Christian Dior is a unique brand. | | .736 |
| I admire Christian Dior. | | .713 |
| Christian Dior is superior when compared to other couture brands. | | .689 |
| The makers of Christian Dior are knowledgeable in their field of work. | | .628 |
| I have a strong overall opinion of Christian Dior. | | .569 |
| Cronbach's alpha | .868 | .792 |
| Eigenvalues | 4.957 | 1.971 |
| KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy | .836 | |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Significance | .000 | |

The results indicated that the brand judgement scale could be used in both samples, although deviations exist in the two conditions. Through the confirmatory factor analysis, it was found that brands without pre-existing connotations must separate out reputation-related items, as the results show that quality and apparent knowledge of the brand are not factors when the brand is unknown.

5.8.6 Factor Analysis for Emotional Value

The five-item scale that represented emotional value was analysed through factor analysis, with the selection of Varimax rotation, the KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity to provide a factor structure.

5.8.7 Condition One – Fictitious

The single factor scale accounted for 81.1% of the variance. The significance of Bartlett's test of sphericity was 0.000 and the Eigenvalue was 4.056. The KMO value resulted in a score of 0.856, which exceeds the requirement of 0.60, thus meeting the assumption for factorability (Coakes 2005). This is shown in Table 5-0-7.

Table 5-0-7

Factor Analysis for Emotional Value (condition one)

| Item | Loading |
|--|----------------|
| Using Benedicte Caravaggio would make me feel good. | .921 |
| Using Benedicte Caravaggio would give me pleasure. | .921 |
| Benedicte Caravaggio makes me want to use it. | .911 |
| Benedicte Caravaggio is a brand I would enjoy. | .906 |
| I would feel relaxed about wearing Benedicte Caravaggio. | .842 |
| Cronbach's Alpha | .941 |
| Eigenvalue | 4.056 |
| KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy | .856 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Significance | .000 |

5.8.8 Condition Two – Established

The single factor scale accounted for 80.2% of the variance. The significance of Bartlett's test of sphericity was 0.000 and the Eigenvalue was 4.014. The KMO value score of 0.855 also exceeded the threshold of 0.60. Table 5-0-8 illustrates the high reliability of the five items of the unidimensional emotional value scale using factor loadings greater than 0.8 with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.938.

Table 5-0-8

Factor Analysis for Emotional Value (condition two)

| Item | Loading |
|--|----------------|
| Using Christian Dior would make me feel good. | .921 |
| Using Christian Dior would give me pleasure. | .915 |
| Christian Dior is a brand I would enjoy. | .910 |
| Christian Dior makes me want to use it. | .905 |
| I would feel relaxed about wearing Christian Dior. | .826 |
| Cronbach's alpha | .938 |
| Eigenvalue | 4.014 |
| KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy | .855 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Significance | .000 |

The results indicate that emotional value was categorised into one computable factor with substantial significance under both conditions. Further, the five items that make up this unidimensional scale had well-established reliability scores.

5.8.9 Factor Analysis for Purchase Intention

The six items that represented purchase intention were analysed through factor analysis and subsequently were found to consist of only one factor. Varimax rotation, the KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were selected to provide a factor structure.

5.8.10 Condition One – Fictitious

These six items explained 81% of the variance with the Cronbach's alpha (0.952) highest with all six items included; this yielded an Eigenvalue of 4.860, KMO of 0.926 and a Bartlett's Sig. of 0.000, as shown in Table 5-0-9.

Table 5-0-9

Factor Analysis for Purchase Intention (condition one)

| Item | Loading |
|---|----------------|
| I would actively seek out Benedicte Caravaggio in order to purchase it. | .918 |
| I would buy Benedicte Caravaggio. | .909 |
| I would buy Benedicte Caravaggio if I happened to see it in a store. | .906 |
| I would shop at Benedicte Caravaggio. | .901 |
| I plan on buying Benedicte Caravaggio. | .895 |
| I intend to try Benedicte Caravaggio. | .871 |
| Cronbach's alpha | .952 |
| Eigenvalue | 4.860 |
| KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy | .926 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Significance | .000 |

5.8.11 Condition Two –Established

Condition two yielded an Eigenvalue of 4.694, KMO of 0.917 and a Bartlett's Sig. of 0.000. The six items were found to explain 78.23% of the variance and they had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.944, as shown in Table 5-0-10.

Table 5-0-10

Factor Analysis for Purchase Intention (condition two)

| Item | Loading |
|---|----------------|
| I would buy Christian Dior. | .909 |
| I would shop at Christian Dior. | .894 |
| I would buy Christian Dior if I happened to see it in a store. | .891 |
| I plan on buying Christian Dior | .884 |
| I would actively seek out Christian Dior in order to purchase it. | .866 |
| I intend to try Christian Dior. | .862 |
| Cronbach's alpha | .944 |
| Eigenvalue | 4.694 |
| KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy | .917 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Significance | .000 |

These results indicate that the dependent construct purchase intention was categorised into a one computable factor with substantial significance. Further, the six items derived from this unidimensional scale had well-established reliability scores under both conditions.

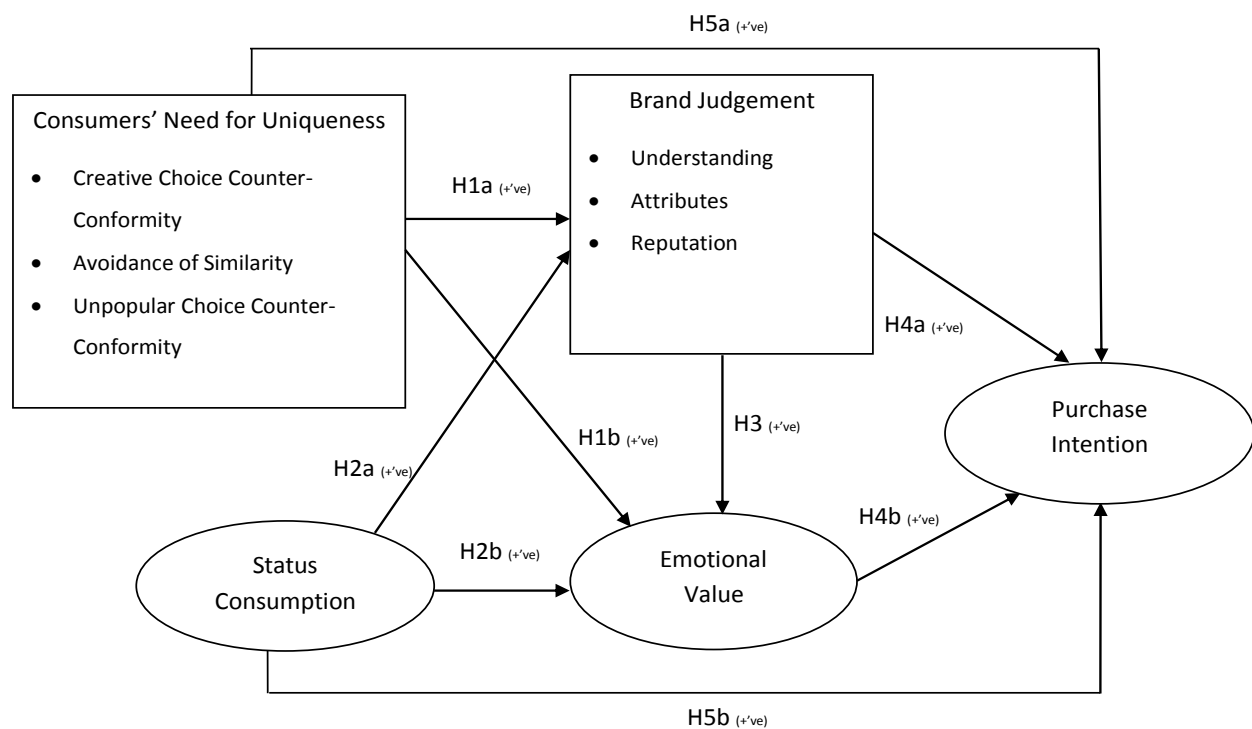
5.9 Sub Hypotheses

As a result of the factor analysis, the hypotheses have been split into sub-hypotheses in order to seek clarity and provide a definitively more accurate answer.

5.10 Condition One – Fictitious

Figure 5-0-3

Model diagrammatically depicting the proposed relationships between consumers' need for uniqueness, status consumption and purchase intention (condition one).



*Note: mediating relationships are not shown.

5.11 Multiple Regression Analysis

5.11.1 Consumers' need for Uniqueness and Status Consumption to Brand Judgement H1a and H2a

The first test multiple-regressed the three factors of consumers' need for uniqueness (independent variables), namely factor 1, avoidance of similarity, factor 2, creative choice counter-conformity and factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity, and status consumption to brand judgement (dependent variable). The results generated are as shown in Table 5-0-11, Table 5-0-12 and Table 5-0-13.

As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, the three factors (factor 1, understanding, factor 2, attributes and factor 3, reputation) that make up brand judgement were regressed independently against the independent variables.

The multiple regression analysis for factor 1, understanding resulted in an R^2 value of 0.215, indicating that the four factors, creative choice counter-conformity, avoidance of similarity, unpopular choice counter-conformity and status consumption, account for approximately 21.5% of the variance in the dependent variable, and an adjusted R^2 value of 0.203.

Avoidance of similarity ($p < 0.495$, $\beta = -0.050$, $t = -0.684$) and unpopular choice counter-conformity ($p < 0.234$, $\beta = 0.88$, $t = 1.194$) were shown to be non-significant predictors of understanding towards luxury apparel. Conversely, creative choice counter-conformity ($p < 0.000$, $\beta = 0.372$, $t = 4.595$) and status consumption ($p < 0.047$, $\beta = 0.123$, $t = 1.994$) were significant with $p < \text{or} = 0.05$, indicating these two factors are good predictors of and have a positive effect on brand judgement towards the selected luxury brand apparel, as shown in Table 5-0-11. Thus, H1ai and H2ai are supported and H1aiv and H1avii are rejected.

Subsequent analysis was performed with factor 2, attributes and factor 3 reputation. Factor 2, attributes showed a significant relationship with creative choice counter-conformity ($p < 0.000$, $\beta = 0.414$, $t = 4.845$) and unpopular choice counter-conformity ($p < 0.011$, $\beta = -0.198$, $t = -2.558$) and a non-significant relationship with the remaining two factors, avoidance of similarity ($p < 0.248$, $\beta = -0.090$, $t = -1.157$) and status consumption ($p < 0.073$, $\beta = 0.117$, $t = 1.799$). These factors produced an R^2 value of 0.114, which indicates that they account for 11.4% of the variance in the dependent variable. However, as for unpopular choice counter-conformity the direction of the relationship ($\beta = -0.198$) was against the hypothesis, H1aviii is rejected as with H1av and H2aii. Thus, only H1aii is supported, as shown in Table 5-0-12.

From the results generated, only status consumption ($p < 0.678$, $\beta = 0.027$, $t = 0.416$) was shown to be a non-significant predictor of reputation (factor 3) consistent with previous research (Husic and Cicic 2009; Vigneron and Johnson 2004; O'Cass and McEwen 2004; Eastman and Goldsmith 1999) on brand equity. All factors of consumers' need for uniqueness (creative choice counter-conformity, avoidance of similarity and unpopular choice counter-conformity) were significant with $p \leq 0.05$. This indicates that consumers' need for uniqueness is a good predictor of reputation towards a fictitious luxury apparel brand, as shown in Table 5-0-13. Avoidance of similarity and unpopular choice counter-conformity were significant but the direction of the relationship ($\beta = -0.206$ and $\beta = -0.202$) was against the hypothesis. Thus, H1avi is rejected as with H2aiii and H1aix, while H1aiii is supported.

Table 5-0-11

Regression Analysis of Consumers' Need for Uniqueness and Status Consumption to Brand Judgement, Factor 1, Understanding

| | B-Values | Standard Error | Beta | Adjusted R² | t-value | Sig. |
|---|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Antecedents | | | | | | |
| Creative Choice Counter-Conformity (H1ai) | .376 | .082 | .372 | .203 | 4.595 | .000 |
| Avoidance of Similarity (H1aiv) | -.050 | .073 | -.050 | .203 | -0.684 | .495 |
| Unpopular Choice Counter-Conformity (H1avii) | .103 | .086 | .088 | .203 | 1.194 | .234 |
| Status Consumption (H2ai) | .125 | .062 | .123 | .203 | 1.994 | .047 |

Table 5-0-12

Regression Analysis of Consumers' Need for Uniqueness and Status Consumption to Brand Judgement, Factor 2, Attributes

| | B-Values | Standard Error | Beta | Adjusted R² | t-value | Sig. |
|---|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Antecedents | | | | | | |
| Creative Choice Counter-Conformity (H1a_{ii}) | .394 | .081 | .414 | .114 | 4.845 | .000 |
| Avoidance of Similarity (H1a_v) | -.084 | .072 | -.090 | .114 | -1.157 | .248 |
| Unpopular Choice Counter-Conformity (H1a_{ix}) | -.219 | .086 | -.198 | .114 | -2.558 | .011 |
| Status Consumption (H2a_{ii}) | .112 | .062 | .117 | .114 | 1.799 | .073 |

Table 5-0-13

Regression Analysis of Consumers' Need for Uniqueness and Status Consumption to Brand Judgement, Factor 3, Reputation

| | B-Values | Standard Error | Beta | Adjusted R² | t-value | Sig. |
|--|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Antecedents | | | | | | |
| Creative Choice Counter-Conformity (H1aiii) | .428 | .081 | .453 | .098 | 5.256 | .000 |
| Avoidance of Similarity (H1avi) | -.190 | .072 | -.206 | .098 | -2.630 | .009 |
| Unpopular Choice Counter-Conformity (H1aix) | -.221 | .086 | -.202 | .098 | -2.581 | .010 |
| Status Consumption (H2aiii) | .026 | .062 | .027 | .098 | .416 | .678 |

5.11.2 Consumers' need for Uniqueness and Status Consumption to Emotional Value H1b and H2b

In conducting a linear regression analysis, emotional value was modelled as the dependent variable with the consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption constructs serving as predictor variables. The results generated are in Table 5-0-14.

The linear regression resulted in an R^2 value of 0.203, which indicates that the four factors that make up the independent variables (avoidance of similarity, creative choice counter-conformity, unpopular choice counter-conformity and status consumption) account for approximately 20.3% of the variance in the dependent variable and an adjusted R^2 value of 0.191.

The results indicate only creative choice counter-conformity ($p < .000$, $\beta = .459$, $t = 5.621$) is significant and is a good predictor of emotional value. Thus, avoidance of similarity ($p < 0.688$, $\beta = 0.30$, $t = 0.402$), unpopular choice counter-conformity ($p < 0.172$, $\beta = -0.102$, $t = -0.573$) and status consumption ($p < 0.325$, $\beta = 0.061$, $t = 0.986$) were shown to be non-significant predictors of emotional value towards a fictitious luxury apparel brand. Therefore, H1bii and H2b are supported and H1bi and H1biii are rejected.

Table 5-0-14

Regression Analysis of Consumers' Need for Uniqueness and Status Consumption to Emotional Value

| | B- Values | Standard Error | Beta | Adjusted R² | t-value | Significance |
|---|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Antecedents | | | | | | |
| Creative Choice Counter- Conformity (H1bi) | .566 | .101 | .459 | .191 | 5.621 | .000 |
| Avoidance of Similarity (H1bii) | .036 | .090 | .030 | .191 | .402 | .688 |
| Unpopular Choice Counter- Conformity(H1biii) | -.146 | .106 | -.102 | .191 | -1.371 | .172 |
| Status Consumption (H2b) | .076 | .077 | .061 | .191 | .986 | .325 |

In summary, multiple and stepwise regression analyses were used to explore the effects the constructs have on each other. Consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption were together regressed with brand judgement and then with emotional value. Creative choice counter-conformity was the only factor significant for both brand judgement and emotional value. Branding is used to create emotional and self-expressive benefits (Keller 2008; Aaker

1996) and this finding supports the importance of creating and maintaining brand equity, demonstrating the outcome without this presence.

5.11.3 Brand Judgement to Emotional Value H3

Multiple regression analysis was carried out on brand judgement (independent variable) to emotional value (dependent variable) as shown in Table 5-0-15. A positive and significant link was found for the antecedent variables factor 1, understanding ($p < 0.000$, $\beta = 0.491$, $t = 10.407$) and factor 2, attributes ($p < 0.000$, $\beta = 0.332$, $t = 6.351$), indicating that positive brand judgement will increase the emotional value to the brand. This accounts for 50.2% of the variance (which indicates an R^2 value of 0.502) and it has an adjusted R^2 value of 0.496. A positive yet non-significant link was found for the remaining antecedent variable reputation ($p < 0.214$, $\beta = 0.061$, $t = 1.245$). Thus, H3i and H3ii are supported and H3iii is rejected.

Table 5-0-15

Regression Analysis of Brand Judgement to Emotional Value

| | B-Values | Standard Error | Beta | Adjusted R ² | t-value | Significance |
|----------------------------|----------|----------------|------|-------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Antecedents | | | | | | |
| Understanding (H3i) | .601 | .058 | .491 | .496 | 10.407 | .000 |
| Attribute (H3ii) | .430 | .068 | .332 | .496 | 6.351 | .000 |
| Reputation (H3iii) | .080 | .065 | .061 | .496 | 1.245 | .214 |

The results found that the relationship between emotional value and factor 3, reputation was shown to have a positive although non-significant relationship. This can be attributed to the fact there is no subsequent knowledge from which to provide a foundation and thus develop an emotional response towards the given condition. Both understanding and attribute had a

positive significant relationship to emotional value, so these two items alone can trigger an emotional response from a respondent when exposed to a fictitious brand.

5.11.4 Antecedents to Purchase intention H4a, H4b, H5a, H5b

Stepwise regression was conducted to determine the influence of consumers' need for uniqueness, status consumption, brand judgement and emotional value on purchase intention, which is displayed in Table 5-0-16.

Avoidance of similarity, understanding, reputation and emotional value were found to have significant relationships with purchase intention. Emotional value is shown to be the most significant factor ($p < 0.000$, $\beta = 0.490$, $R^2 = 0.471$), and this reflects that brands with high favourable emotional triggers or associations will most likely lead to purchase, similar to the finding by Ryan (2008). Understanding ($p < 0.000$, $\beta = 0.353$, $R^2 = 0.558$), reputation ($p < 0.000$, $\beta = -0.159$, $R^2 = 0.585$) and avoidance of similarity ($p < 0.032$, $\beta = 0.091$, $R^2 = 0.592$) were second, third and fourth most significant, respectively. However, reputation was shown to have a significant negative relationship with purchase intention, which in real terms means that respondents who rated the brand higher in terms of reputation are less likely to intend to purchase. Therefore, H4ai, H4aiii, H4b and H5aii are supported. Creative choice counter-conformity, unpopular choice counter-conformity, status consumption and attributes were found to be non-significant; hence, H4aai, H5ai, H5aii and H5b are rejected.

Table 5-0-16***Antecedents to Purchase Intention***

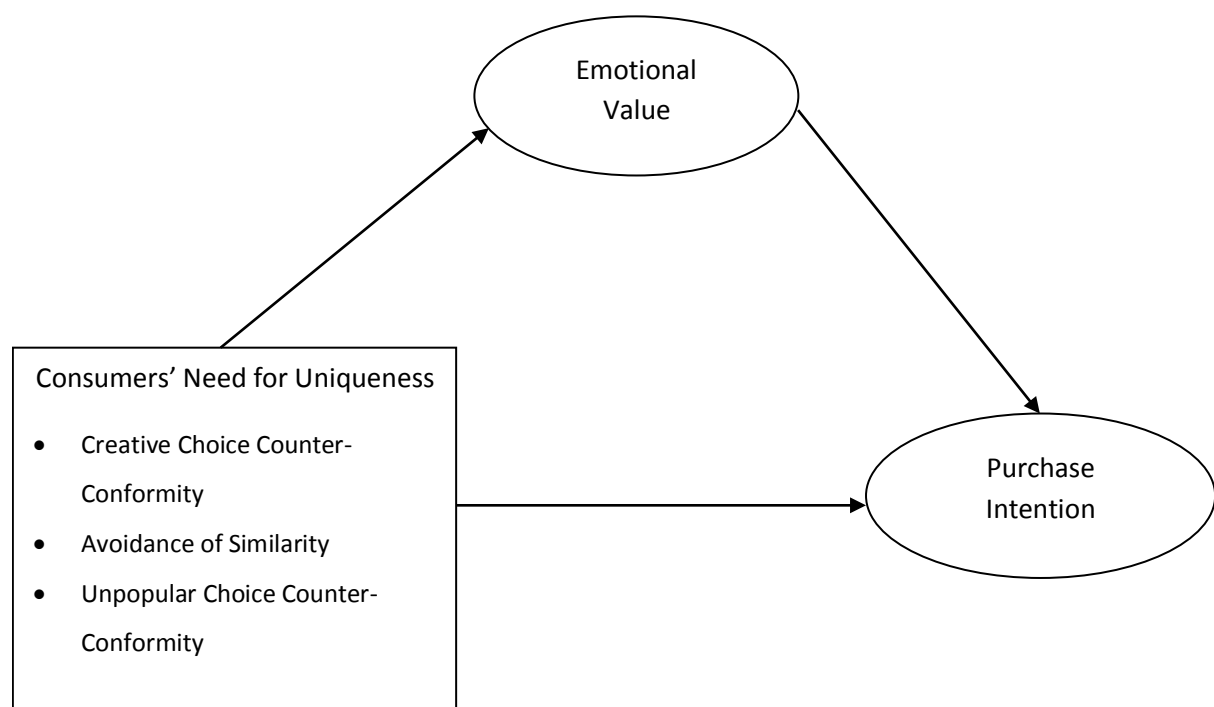
| | B-Values | Standard Error | Beta | Adjusted R² | t-value | Significance |
|---|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Antecedents | | | | | | |
| Understanding (H4ai) | .408 | .059 | .353 | .586 | 6.864 | .000 |
| Attributes (H4aai) | - | - | - | - | .820 | .304 |
| Reputation (H4aiii) | -.197 | .052 | -.159 | .586 | -3.783 | .000 |
| Emotional Value (H4b) | .464 | .050 | .490 | .586 | 9.187 | .000 |
| Creative Choice Counter-Conformity (H5ai) | - | - | - | - | .282 | .778 |
| Avoidance of Similarity (H5aai) | .104 | .048 | .091 | .586 | 2.156 | .032 |
| Unpopular Choice Counter-Conformity (H5aiii) | - | - | - | - | 1.029 | .304 |
| Status Consumption (H5b) | - | - | - | - | .337 | .737 |

In summary, the effects that consumers' need for uniqueness, status consumption, brand judgement and emotional value had on purchase intention were investigated using a stepwise regression method. Emotional value was found to be the most significant factor, followed by understanding, reputation and avoidance of similarity. Status consumption, creative choice counter-conformity, unpopular choice counter-conformity and attributes were found to be non-significant.

Although all types of consumer responses are possible, emotions evoked by a brand can become so strongly associated that they are accessible during product consumption or use. This is why emotional bearing towards a brand is an important antecedent for consumers with a high need for uniqueness in the purchase of luxury apparel brands. Research by Park, Rabolt and Jeon (2008), Ryan (2008) and Sweeney and Soutar (2001) also found similar results, namely that emotional value had a significant positive effect on purchase intention.

5.11.5 Mediation Analysis H6

Figure 5-0-4 Mediating relationship

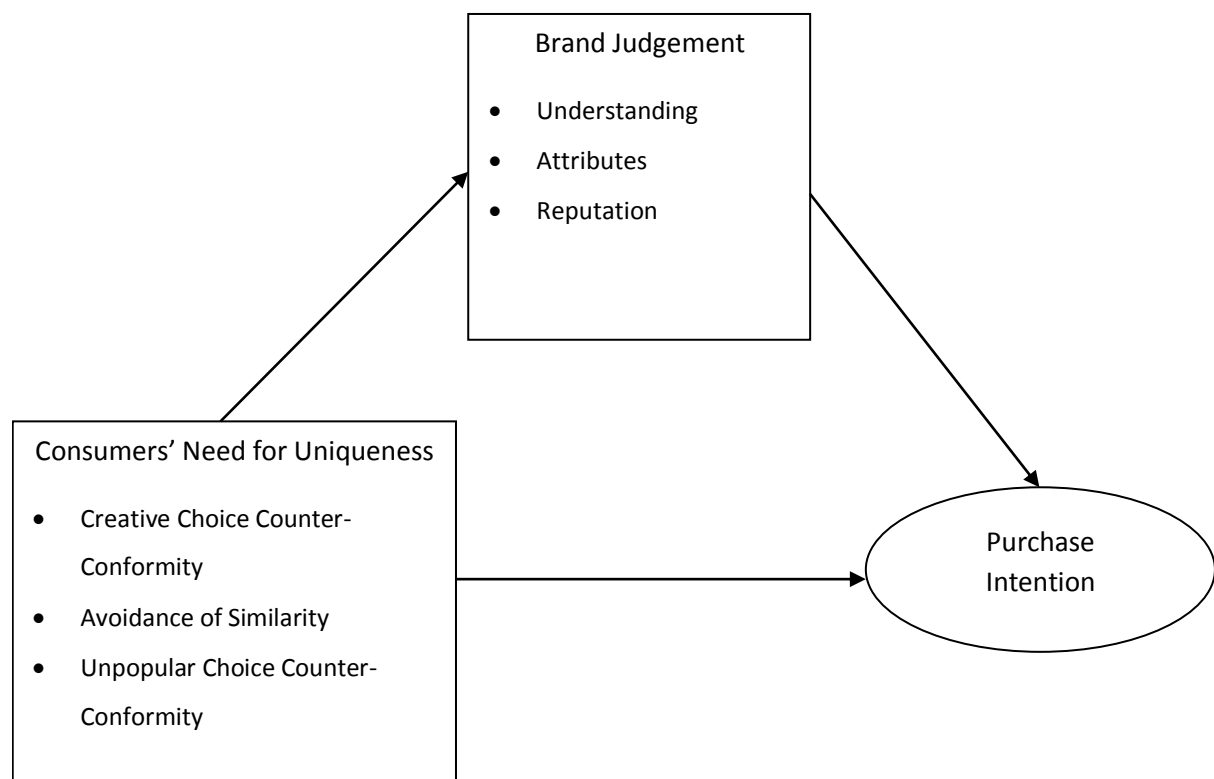


H6 looks at the relationship emotional value (m) has as a mediating variable between the following independent variables: consumers' need for uniqueness (x) as the predictor and purchase intention (y) as the dependent. Mediation analysis was conducted in accordance with the four-step process proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986).

The results generated in Table 5-0-16 show the non-significance that factors 1 and 3 of consumers' need for uniqueness (creative choice counter-conformity and unpopular choice counter-conformity) have with purchase intention from the stepwise regression analysis. Step 2 of Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation analysis requires the result to be significant in order to progress through to the next step and the mediation analysis to hold up. Factor 2, avoidance of similarity did show a significant result with purchase intention (Table 5-0-16). However, it shows a non-significant result with emotional value from the linear regression analysis (Table 5-0-15). Hence, H6 shows no mediation.

5.11.6 Mediation Analysis H7

Figure 5-0-5 Mediating Relationship



H7 examines the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness (x) as the predictor variable and purchase intention (y) as the dependent variable using brand judgement (m) as the mediating variable. The four-step process proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) was followed to ascertain the state of the relationship.

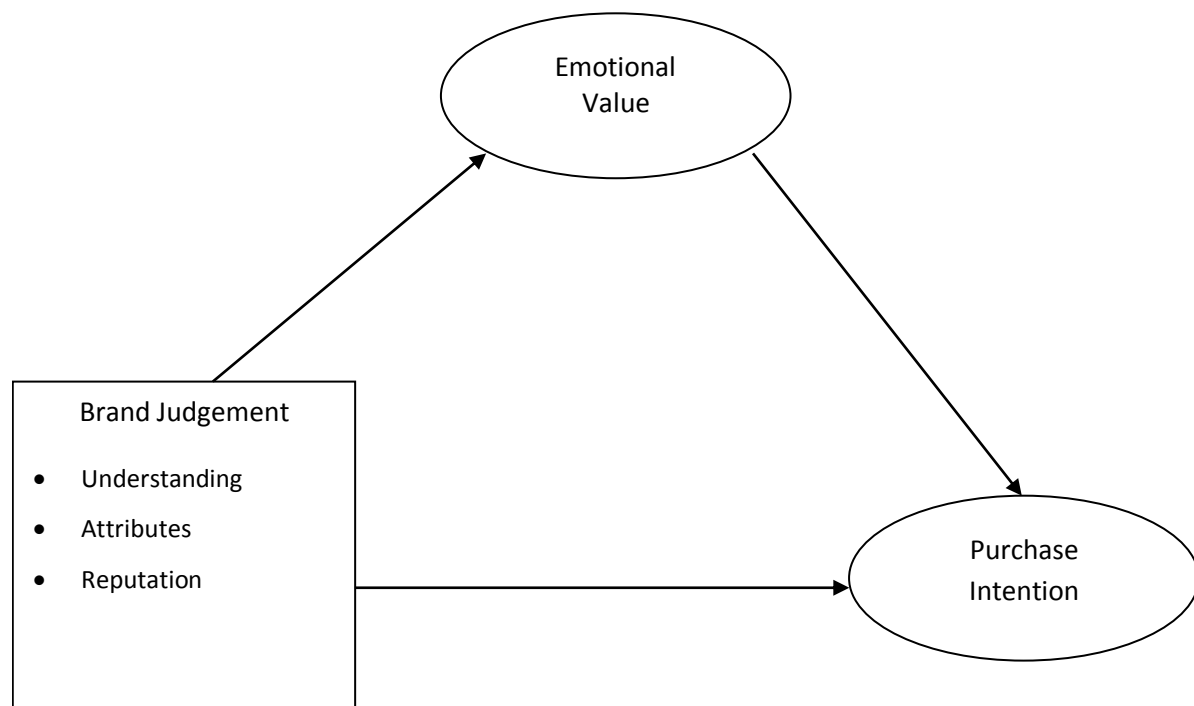
Regression analysis was carried out with consumers' need for uniqueness (x) as the predictor and brand judgement (m) as the dependent variable. Only avoidance of similarity was significant in the stepwise regression analysis against purchase intention and, therefore, this is the only variable that can be regressed from consumers' need for uniqueness. Table 5-0-13 shows the results of the linear regression analysis between avoidance of similarity and brand judgement. Reputation was shown to be the only significant factor; thus, it fulfils the requirements for the mediation analysis to hold up.

CNFU avoid: (Sig. = 0.632, β = -.030, t = -.479).

The relationship was found to be non-significant for avoidance of similarity in a linear regression analysis against reputation. Step 1 of Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation analysis requires the result to be significant in order to progress through to the next step and the mediation analysis to hold up. Hence, H7 shows no mediation.

5.11.7 Mediation Analysis H8

Figure 5-0-6 Mediating relationship



H8 tested the relationship between brand judgement (x) and purchase intention (y) to test whether emotional value (m) played a mediating role. Once again, the four-step process proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) was followed to ascertain the state of the relationship. Table 5-0-15 shows the results from the linear regression analysis of reputation and emotional value and the non-significant result. Table 5-0-16 shows the results from a stepwise regression between the antecedent variable brand judgement and purchase intention, which show a non-significant relationship between several factors and brand judgement (attributes and reputation). Baron and Kenny (1986) require all results to be significant in each of the four steps for the mediation to hold; thus, only understanding can be used.

1. Regression analysis was carried out with understanding (x) as the predictor and emotional value (m) as the dependent variable. The relationship was found to be significant (Sig. = 0.00, β = .621, t = 12.767).
2. The second step involved conducting a regression analysis with understanding (x) as the predictor variable and purchase intention (y) as the dependent. The result indicated a significant result (Sig. = 0.00, β = .656, t = 13.984).
3. The third step involved a regression analysis with the mediating variable emotional value (m) as the predictor and purchase intention (y) as the dependent variable. This analysis was found to be positive with a significance level of 0.000 (Sig. = 0.00, β = .688, t = 15.263).
4. The fourth step involved conducting a regression analysis with both understanding (x) and emotional value (m) as the predictors and purchase intention (y) as the dependent variable. This analysis found emotional value and understanding (x) to be significant, indicating a partial mediation.

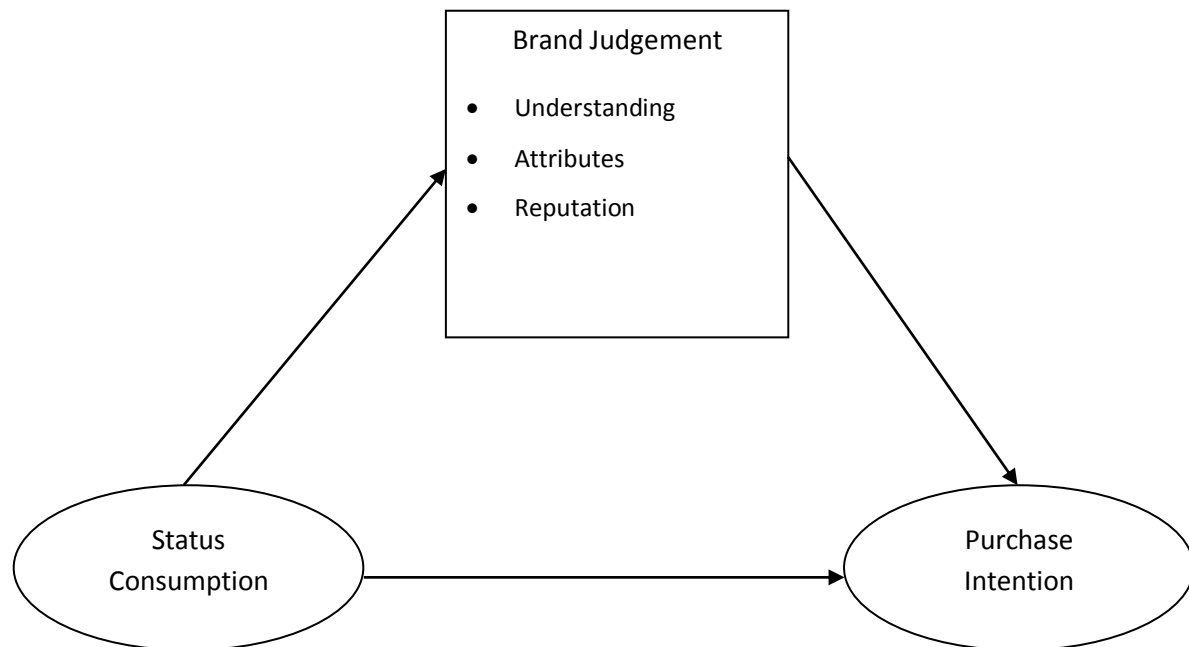
Emotional value (m) (Sig. = 0.00, β = .457, t = 8.654)

Understanding (x) (Sig. = 0.00, β = .372, t = 7.042).

A Sobel test confirmed the finding of a partial mediation (test statistic = 9.715 and p-value = 0.00), which indicates that emotional value is a significant partial mediator of understanding leading to purchase intention. Thus, H8 is a partial mediation.

5.11.8 Mediation Analysis H9

Figure 5-0-7 Mediating Relationship

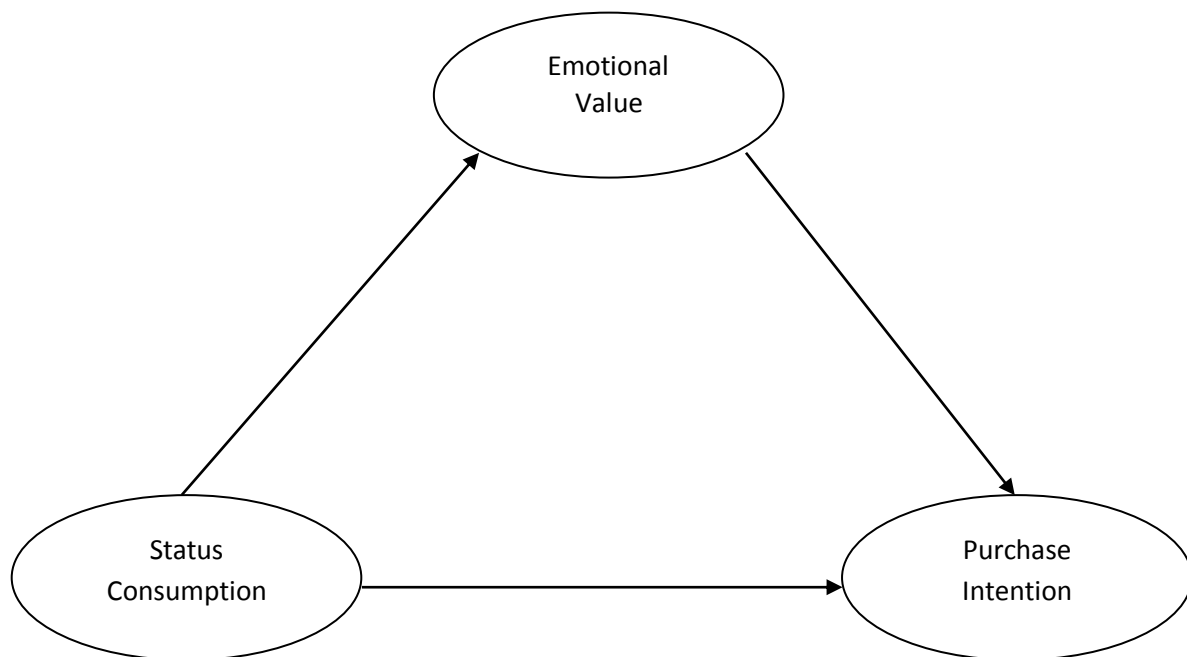


H9 looks at the relationship brand judgement (m) has as a mediating variable between the independent variable, status consumption (x) as the predictor and purchase intention (y) as the dependent variable.

The results generated in Table 5-0-16 show the non-significant result status consumption has with purchase intention from the stepwise regression analysis. Step 2 of Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation analysis requires the result to be significant in order to progress through to the next step and the mediation analysis to hold up. Hence, no mediation analysis has been carried out and H9 indicates no mediation.

5.11.9 Mediation Analysis H10

Figure 5-0-8 Mediating Relationship



H10 analysed the relationship emotional value (m) has as a mediating variable between status consumption (x) and purchase intention (y) according to the four-step process proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986).

As indicated in H9, no mediation analysis has been carried out, as a stepwise regression analysis shows no significance between status and purchase intention for this sample. Therefore, H10 has no mediation.

5.11.10 Discussion

In summary, H6 and H7 looked at the impact emotional value and brand judgement had as mediating factors between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention. This mediation was conducted in accordance with the four-step process designed by Baron and Kenny (1986). As step 2 was non-significant, the four-step process was unable to be completed and thus it was determined that H6 and H7 show no mediation, namely emotional value and brand judgement as mediating factors of consumers' need for uniqueness do not influence the purchase intention of a fictitious haute couture luxury apparel brand.

The next hypothesis H8 looked at the mediating effects emotional value had on the relationships between brand judgement and purchase intention. This was investigated using the four-step process proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986). The results found that emotional value played a partial mediating role between the two constructs. This is in accordance with the findings of Lee et al. (2008) and Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) in which emotional value was found to be a mediating variable between perceived quality and purchase intention. In this study, this can be interpreted that positive brand judgement produces an emotional value that influences the purchase intention of a fictitious haute couture luxury brand.

The final two mediating hypotheses H9 and H10 proposed that the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention is mediated by brand judgement and emotional value, respectively. In other words, status-seeking consumers will only purchase a fictitious luxury apparel brand when brand perceptions (brand judgement and emotional value) exist. However, the results of the study show no mediation for both hypotheses, implying that brand perceptions do not influence the purchase intention of a fictitious haute couture luxury apparel brand.

Table 5-0-17

Summary of the results H1 to H10

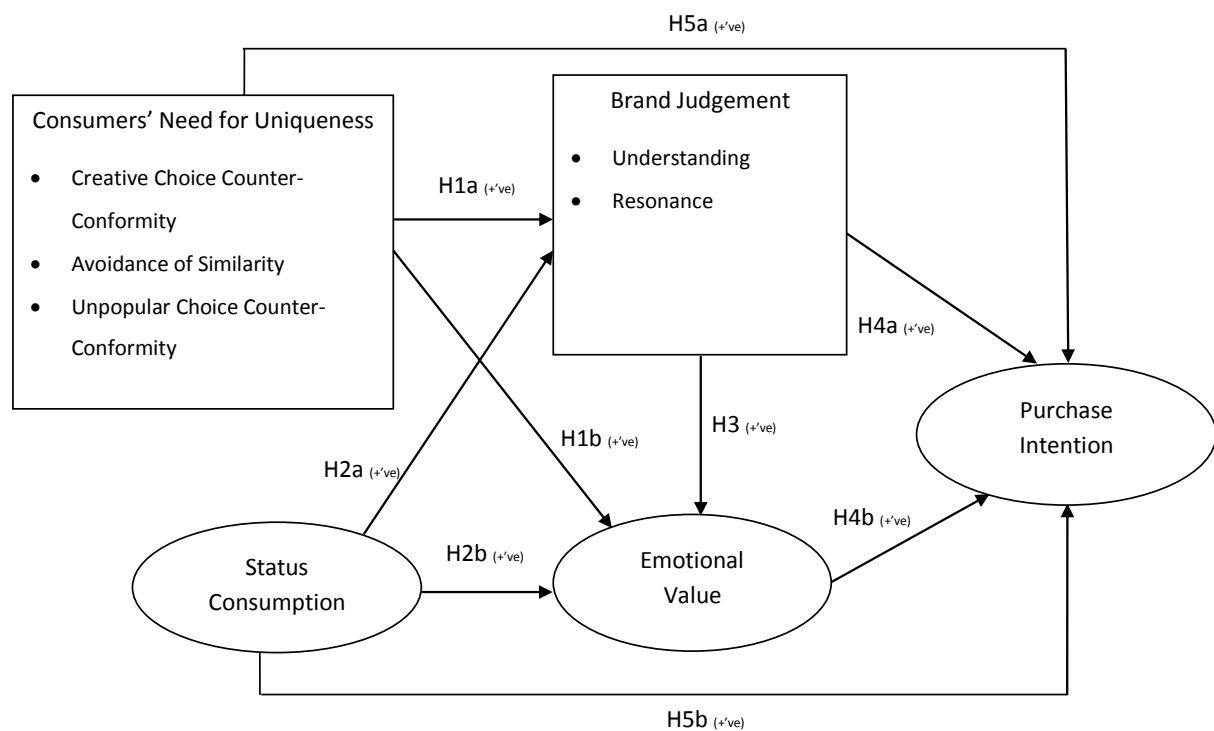
| Hypotheses (Fictitious brand) | Findings |
|---|-----------------|
| <i>H1ai</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Supported |
| <i>H1aii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, attributes). | Supported |
| <i>H1aiii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 3, reputation). | Supported |
| <i>H1aiv</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Not Supported |
| <i>H1av</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, attributes). | Not Supported |
| <i>H1avi</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 3, reputation). | Not Supported |
| <i>H1avii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Not Supported |
| <i>H1aviii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, attributes). | Not Supported |
| <i>H1aix</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 3, reputation). | Not Supported |
| <i>H1bi</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Supported |
| <i>H1bii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported |
| <i>H1biii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported |
| <i>H2ai</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Supported |
| <i>H2aii</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, attributes). | Not Supported |
| <i>H2aiii</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 3, reputation). | Not Supported |
| <i>H2b</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported |
| <i>H3i</i> : Brand judgement (factor 1, understanding) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Supported |
| <i>H3ii</i> : Brand judgement (factor 2, attributes) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Supported |
| <i>H3iii</i> : Brand judgement (factor 3, reputation) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported |
| <i>H4ai</i> : Consumers' perception of judgement (factor 1, understanding) | Supported |

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | |
| <i>H4aii</i> : Consumers' perception of judgement (factor 2, attributes) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported |
| <i>H4aiii</i> : Consumers' perception of judgement (factor 3, reputation) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported |
| <i>H4b</i> : Consumers' brand perceptions of emotional value significantly and positively influence purchase intention. | Supported |
| <i>H5ai</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported |
| <i>H5aii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Supported |
| <i>H5aiii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported |
| <i>H5b</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported |
| <i>H6</i> : Emotional value mediates the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention. | No Mediation All factors |
| <i>H7</i> : Brand judgement (factor 3, reputation) mediates the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, avoidance of similarity) and purchase intention. | No Mediation All factors |
| <i>H8</i> : Emotional value mediates the relationship between brand judgement (factor 1, understanding) and purchase intention. | Partial Mediation |
| <i>H9</i> : Brand judgement mediates the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention. | No Mediation All factors |
| <i>H10</i> : Emotional value mediates the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention. | No Mediation |

5.12 Condition Two – Established

Figure 5-0-9

Model diagrammatically depicting the proposed relationships between consumers' need for uniqueness, status consumption and purchase intention (condition two).



*Note: Mediating relationships are not shown.

5.12.1 Consumers' need for Uniqueness and Status Consumption to Brand Judgement H1a and H2a

Multiple regression was used to test the three factors of consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, avoidance of similarity, factor 2, creative choice counter-conformity and factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) and status consumption (independent variables) on the factors of brand judgement (factor 1 understanding and factor 2 resonance) (dependent variables) for H1a and H2a.

The adjusted R^2 found was 0.231, with an R^2 value of 0.243. It was found that creative choice counter-conformity ($p = 0.000$, $\beta = 0.406$, $t = 5.626$) and status consumption ($p = 0.000$, $\beta = 0.223$, $t = 3.782$) had a significant relationship with understanding (factor 1), as did avoidance of similarity ($p = 0.039$). Unpopular choice counter-conformity showed a non-significant relationship ($p > 0.05$) and the direction of the relationship from avoidance of similarity to understanding ($\beta = -0.148$) was against the hypothesis. Thus, H1aiii and H1av are rejected and H1ai and H2ai are supported. This is presented in Table 5-0-18.

The results found that only avoidance of similarity was non-significant with resonance (factor 2) ($p > 0.05$). Creative choice counter-conformity, unpopular choice counter-conformity and status consumption were all significant ($p < 0.05$), with an adjusted R^2 of 0.184 and an R^2 of 0.197. These factors account for 19.7% of the variance in the dependent variable. However, unpopular choice counter-conformity showed a negative relationship ($\beta = -0.123$) against the hypothesis. Thus, H1avi and H1aiv are rejected and H1aii and H2aii are supported, as shown in Table 5-0-19.

Table 5-0-18

Regression Analysis of Consumers' Need for Uniqueness and Status Consumption to Brand Judgement, Factor 1, Understanding

| | B-Values | Standard Error | Beta | Adjusted R² | t-value | Sig. |
|--|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Antecedents | | | | | | |
| Creative Choice Counter-Conformity (H1ai) | .446 | .079 | .406 | .231 | 5.626 | .000 |
| Avoidance of Similarity (H1aiii) | -.166 | .080 | -.148 | .231 | -2.075 | .039 |
| Unpopular Choice Counter-Conformity(H1av) | .130 | .080 | .099 | .231 | 1.632 | .104 |
| Status Consumption (H2ai) | .236 | .062 | .223 | .231 | 3.782 | .000 |

Table 5-0-19

Regression Analysis of Consumers' Need for Uniqueness and Status Consumption to Brand Judgement, Factor 2, Resonance

| | B-Values | Standard Error | Beta | Adjusted R² | t-value | Sig. |
|--|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Antecedents | | | | | | |
| Creative Choice Counter-Conformity (H1aai) | .368 | .066 | .415 | .184 | 5.572 | .000 |
| Avoidance of Similarity (H1aiv) | -.112 | .067 | -.124 | .184 | -1.687 | .093 |
| Unpopular Choice Counter-Conformity (H1avi) | -.130 | .066 | -.123 | .184 | -1.968 | .050 |
| Status Consumption (H2aai) | .178 | .052 | .208 | .184 | 3.418 | .001 |

5.12.2 Consumers' need for Uniqueness and Status Consumption to Emotional Value H1bi, H1bii, H1biii and H2b

In conducting a linear regression analysis, emotional value was modelled as the dependent variable with consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption serving as predictor variables.

The results generated are shown in Table 5-0-20. The linear regression resulted in an R^2 value of 0.325, which indicates that the four factors that make up the independent variables (avoidance of similarity, creative choice counter-conformity, unpopular choice counter-conformity and status consumption) account for approximately 32.5% of the variance, and an adjusted R^2 of 0.315.

Creative choice counter-conformity ($p < .000$, $\beta = 0.423$, $t = 6.196$), avoidance of similarity ($p < 0.006$, $\beta = -0.185$, $t = -2.753$) and status consumption ($p < .000$, $\beta = 0.382$, $t = 6.860$) were shown to be significant predictors of emotional value. Thus, unpopular choice counter-conformity ($p < 0.310$, $\beta = -0.058$, $t = -1.016$) is shown to be non-significant predictor of emotional value towards a luxury apparel brand. However, avoidance of similarity indicates a negative direction ($\beta = -0.185$) to the hypothesis, and thus H1bii is rejected along with H1biii. H1bi and H2b are supported. These findings are contrary to the research by Knight and Kim (2007), who found only unpopular choice counter-conformity of the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness to be significant to emotional value.

Table 5-0-20

Regression Analysis of Consumers' Need for Uniqueness and Status Consumption to Emotional Value

| | B-Values | Standard Error | Beta | Adjusted R² | t-value | Significance |
|---|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Antecedents | | | | | | |
| Creative Choice Counter-Conformity (H1bi) | .568 | .092 | .423 | .315 | 6.196 | .000 |
| Avoidance of Similarity(H1bii) | -.254 | .092 | -.185 | .315 | -2.753 | .006 |
| Unpopular Choice Counter-Conformity (H1biii) | -.094 | .092 | -.058 | .315 | -1.016 | .310 |
| Status Consumption (H2b) | .495 | .072 | .382 | .315 | 6.860 | .000 |

H1 and H2 tested whether consumers' need for uniqueness was significantly related to consumers' brand perceptions including the brand judgement and emotional value of the established luxury apparel brand. As shown in Table 5-0-20, all factors of consumers' need for uniqueness measured differently to understanding and perception, while only unpopular choice was not significantly related to emotional value. Status consumption was significantly related to all brand perception measures.

Avoidance of similarity had a negative effect on perceived understanding and emotional value. In other words, respondents with a high need for avoiding similarity had negative perceptions in terms of product opinions, needs and overall understanding along with emotional value. Unpopular choice also had a negative effect on resonance. This indicates that Australian consumers who need an unpopular brand for their own personal image are less likely to perceive the established luxury brand as superior, unique and of high quality.

Creative choice counter-conformity and status consumption had a positive effect on all brand perception measures, thus suggesting that consumers with a high need to express their individuality and also to be considered arbiters of good taste are more likely to perceive the established apparel brand as high quality, reputable and prestigious.

5.12.3 Brand Judgement to Emotional Value H3

A multiple regression analysis was carried out on brand judgement (independent variable) to emotional value (dependent variable). A positive and significant link was found for the antecedent variables understanding ($p < 0.000$, $\beta = 0.350$, $t = 7.345$) and resonance ($p < 0.000$, $\beta = 0.508$, $t = 10.656$), thereby indicating that positive brand judgement will increase the emotional value to the brand. This accounted for 53.9% of the variance (which indicated an R^2 value of 0.539) and an adjusted R^2 value of .535, as shown in Table 5-0-21. Thus, H3 is fully supported.

Table 5-0-21

Regression Analysis of Brand Judgement to Emotional Value

| | B-Values | Standard Error | Beta | Adjusted R^2 | t-value | Significance |
|----------------------------|----------|----------------|------|----------------|---------|--------------|
| Antecedents | | | | | | |
| Understanding (H3i) | .429 | .058 | .350 | .535 | 7.345 | .000 |
| Resonance (H3ii) | .769 | .072 | .508 | .535 | 10.656 | .000 |

The results found that the relationship between brand judgement and emotional value had a significant and positive relationship. This supports previous findings by Lee et al. (2008), Ryan (2008), Knight and Kim (2007), Babin and Babin (2001) and Chaudhuri and Holbrook

(2001), which found that emotional value influences the purchase decision through brand loyalty and effect.

5.12.4 Antecedents to Purchase Intention H4a, H4b, H5a, H5b

A stepwise regression was conducted to determine the influence of consumers' need for uniqueness, status consumption, brand judgement and emotional value on purchase intention. As displayed in Table 5-0-22, status consumption, understanding and emotional value were found to have significant relationships with purchase intention. Emotional value is shown to have the most significant relationship ($p < 0.000$, $\beta = 0.472$, $R^2 = 0.536$) similar to the finding by Ryan (2008). Understanding ($p < 0.000$, $\beta = 0.297$, $R^2 = 0.602$) and status consumption ($p < 0.000$, $\beta = 0.189$, $R^2 = 0.630$) were second and third most significant, respectively. This result supports the findings of previous studies (Phau and Teah 2009; Jung and Sung 2008; Babin and Babin 2001; Knight and Kim 2007), which found that positive emotional factors encourage purchase intention. Thus, H4ai, H4b and H5b are supported.

All three factors of consumers' need for uniqueness, namely creative choice counter-conformity, avoidance of similarity, and unpopular choice counter-conformity, were found to be non-significant along with factor 2 from brand judgement, resonance; hence, H4aii, H5ai, H5aii and H5aiii are all rejected.

Table 5-0-22***Antecedents to Purchase Intention***

| | B-Values | Standard Error | Beta | Adjusted R² | t-value | Significance |
|---|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Antecedents | | | | | | |
| Understanding (H4ai) | .346 | .055 | .297 | .625 | 6.326 | .000 |
| Resonance (H4aai) | - | - | - | - | -.695 | .488 |
| Emotional Value (H4b) | .447 | .048 | .472 | .625 | 9.398 | .000 |
| Creative Choice Counter-Conformity (H5ai) | - | - | - | - | 1.523 | .129 |
| Avoidance of Similarity (H5aai) | - | - | - | - | .853 | .395 |
| Unpopular Choice Counter-Conformity (H5aiii) | - | - | - | - | 1.274 | .204 |
| Status Consumption (H5b) | .231 | .053 | .189 | .625 | 4.329 | .000 |

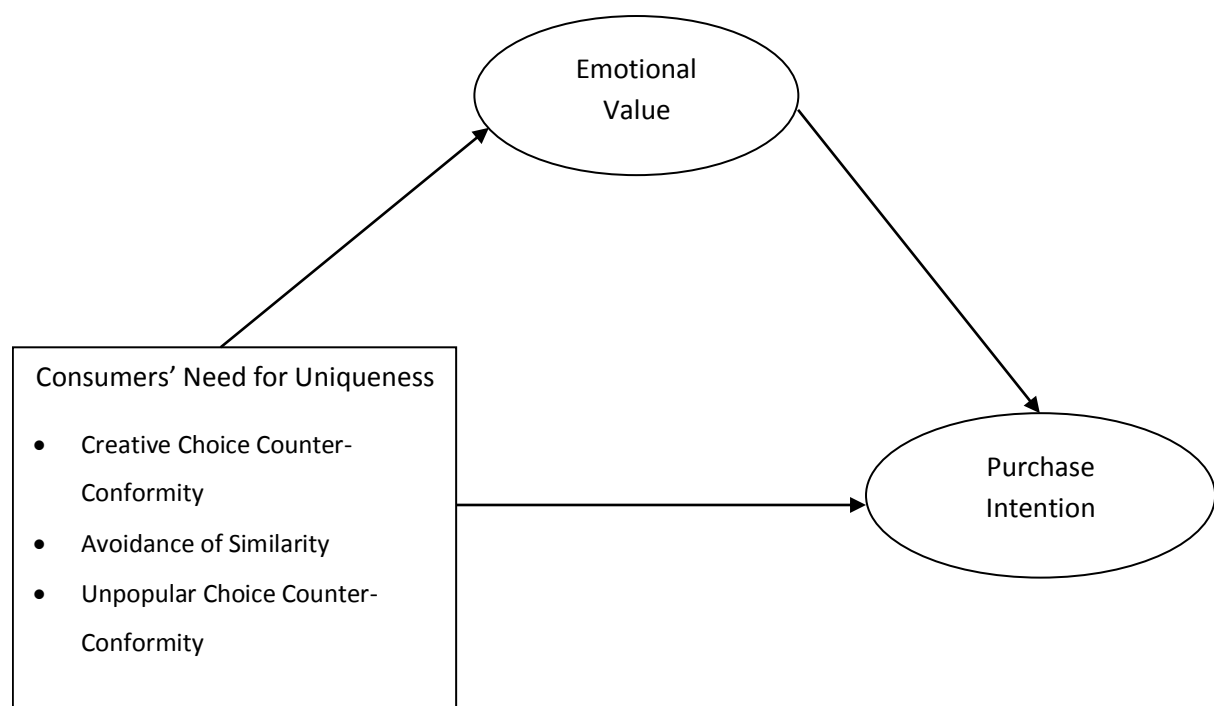
5.12.5 Discussion

In summary, the effect consumers' need for uniqueness, status consumption, brand judgement and emotional value had on purchase intention was investigated using a stepwise regression method. It was found that status consumption, understanding and emotional value all had a significant and positive effect on purchase intention, while consumers' need for uniqueness and resonance were found to be non-significant. Furthermore, stepwise regression analysis showed that emotional value had the most significant relationship, followed by understanding and status consumption. This is in line with previous findings by Knight and Kim (2007) and Ryan (2008), which also found that emotional value had the most significant effect on purchase intention.

Consumers' need for uniqueness was found to be non-significant in influencing purchase intention directly. This finding is similar to Sweeney and Soutar (2001) who found that emotional attitude towards a brand is an important antecedent for consumers with a high need for uniqueness in the purchase of luxury apparel brands. Thus, consumers' need for uniqueness alone is not strong enough to independently influence purchase intention.

5.12.6 Mediation Analysis H6

Figure 5-0-10 Mediating Relationship

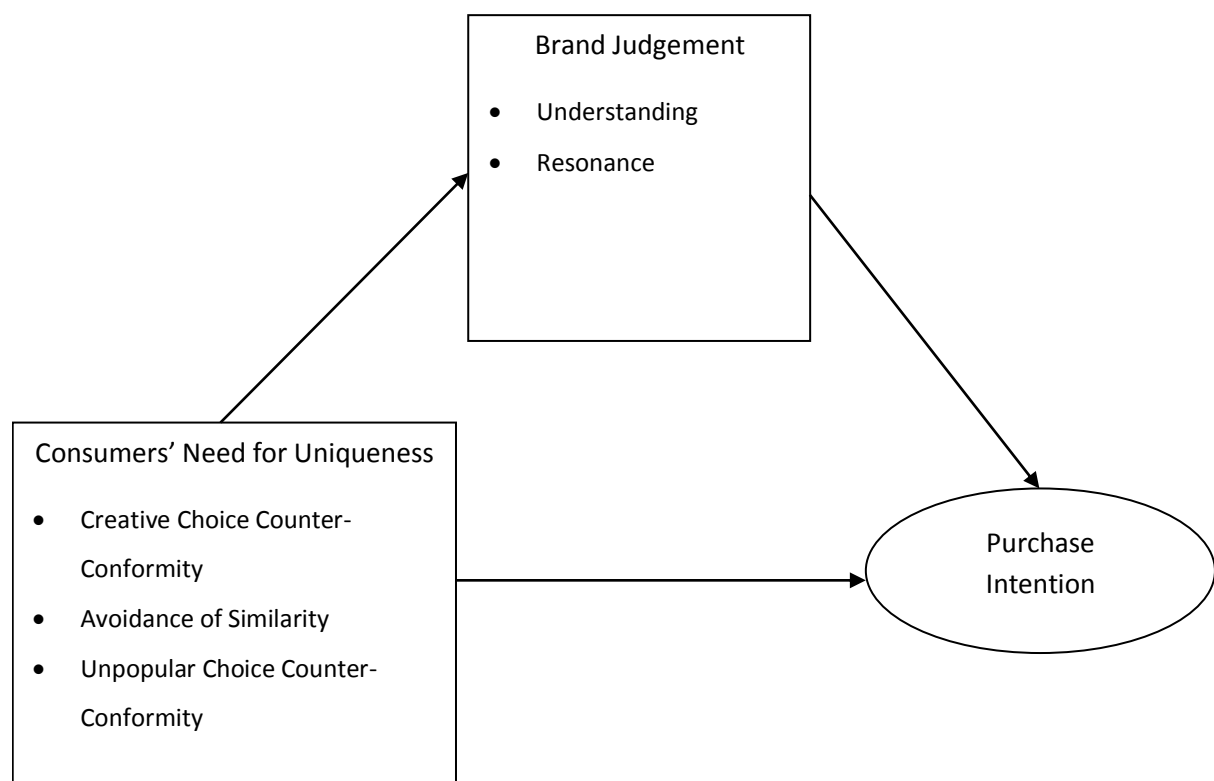


H6 looks at the relationship emotional value (m) has as a mediating variable between the following independent variables: consumers' need for uniqueness (x) as the predictor and purchase intention (y) as the dependent. Mediation analysis was conducted in accordance with the four-step process proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986).

The results generated in Table 5-0-22 show the non-significant result of all factors of consumers' need for uniqueness (creative choice counter-conformity, avoidance of similarity and unpopular choice counter-conformity) on purchase intention from the stepwise regression analysis. In order for mediation to be possible, regression analysis steps 1 to 3 must be significant (Baron and Kenny 1986), which means that step 2 is non-significant and does not meet the requirements to conduct a mediation analysis. Thus, H6 has no mediation.

5.12.7 Mediation Analysis H7

Figure 5-0-11 Mediating Relationship



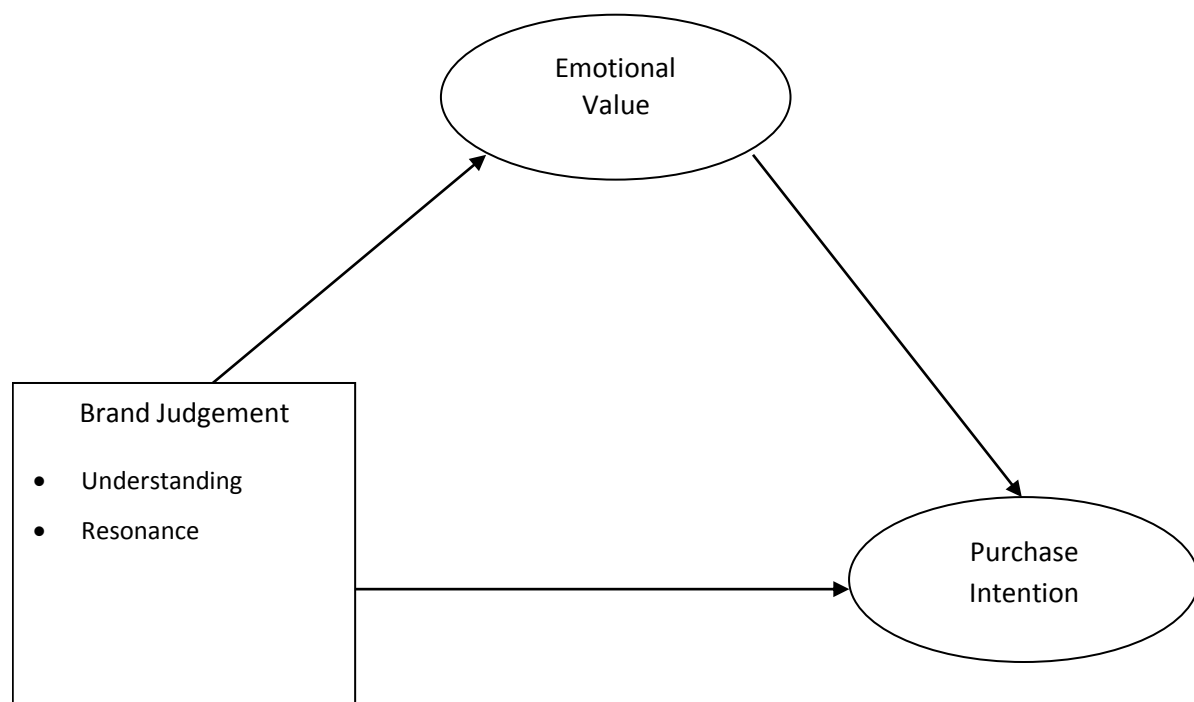
H7 examines the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness (x) as the predictor variable and purchase intention (y) as the dependent variable using brand judgement (m) as

the mediating variable. The four-step process proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) was followed to ascertain the state of the relationship.

A regression analysis was carried out with consumers' need for uniqueness (x) as the predictor and brand judgement (m) as the dependent variable. None of the factors of consumers' need for uniqueness showed a significant result in the stepwise regression analysis against purchase intention, as shown in Table 5-0-22. Therefore, none of the variables can be used for mediation. Hence, H7 shows no mediation.

5.12.8 Mediation Analysis H8

Figure 5-0-12 Mediating Relationship



H8 tested the relationship between brand judgement (x) and purchase intention (y) to test whether emotional value (m) played a mediating role. Once again, the four-step process proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) was followed to ascertain the state of the relationship.

Table 5-0-16 shows the results from the stepwise regression between the antecedent variable brand judgement and purchase intention, which shows a non-significant relationship between factor 2 of brand judgement (resonance). Baron and Kenny (1986) require that all results are significant in each of the four steps for the mediation to hold; thus, only factor 1, understanding can be used.

1. Regression analysis was carried out with understanding (x) as the predictor and emotional value (m) as the dependent variable. The relationship was found to be significant (Sig. = 0.00, $\beta = .576$, $t = 11.257$).
2. The second step involved conducting a regression analysis with understanding (x) as the predictor variable and purchase intention (y) as the dependent. The result indicated a significant result (Sig. = 0.00, $\beta = .633$, $t = 13.044$).
3. The third step involved a regression analysis with the mediating variable emotional value (m) as the predictor and purchase intention (y) as the dependent variable. This analysis was found to be positive with a significance level of 0.000 ($\beta = .732$, $t = 17.147$).
4. The fourth step involved conducting a regression analysis with both understanding (x) and emotional value (m) as the predictors and purchase intention (y) as the dependent

variable. This analysis found emotional value and understanding (x) to be significant, indicating a partial mediation.

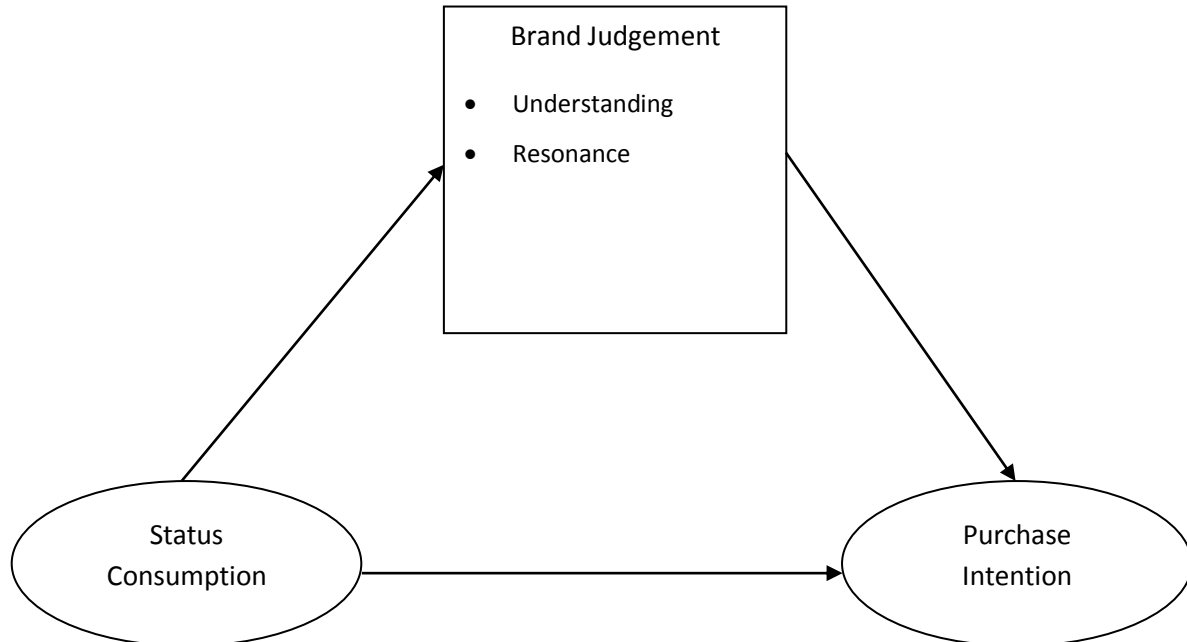
Emotional value (m) (Sig. = 0.00, β = .550, t = 11.355).

Understanding (x) (Sig. = 0.00, β = .316, t = 6.522).

A Sobel test confirmed the finding of a partial mediation (test statistic = 9.413 and p -value = 0.00), which indicates that emotional value is a partial mediator of understanding leading to purchase intention. Thus, H8 is a partial mediation.

5.12.9 Mediation Analysis H9

Figure 5-0-13 Mediating Relationship



H9 looks at the relationship brand judgement (m) has as a mediating variable between the independent variable, status consumption (x) as the predictor and purchase intention (y) as the dependent variable.

Understanding was shown to be the only significant factor in the stepwise regression analysis of brand judgement to purchase intention. Baron and Kenny (1986) require all results to be significant in each of the four steps for the mediation to hold; thus, only understanding can be used.

The following mediation analysis was conducted in accordance with the four-step process proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986).

1. Regression analysis with status consumption (x) as the predictor and the mediating variable brand judgement (factor 1, understanding) (m) as the dependent variable. The relationship was found to be significant (Sig. 0.000, $\beta = .337$, $t = 5.712$).
2. The second step involved conducting a regression analysis with status consumption (x) as the predictor variable and purchase intention (y) as the dependent. The result was found to be significant (Sig. 0.000, $\beta = .511$, $t = 9.492$).
3. The third regression analysis was conducted with the mediating variable understanding (m) as the predictor and purchase intention (y) as the dependent variable. This analysis found a significant result (Sig. 0.000, $\beta = .633$, $t = 13.044$).
4. The final step in the regression analysis used status consumption (x) and understanding (m) as the predictors and purchase intention (y) as the dependent

variable. This analysis found status consumption (x) and understanding (m) to be significant, indicating a partial mediation.

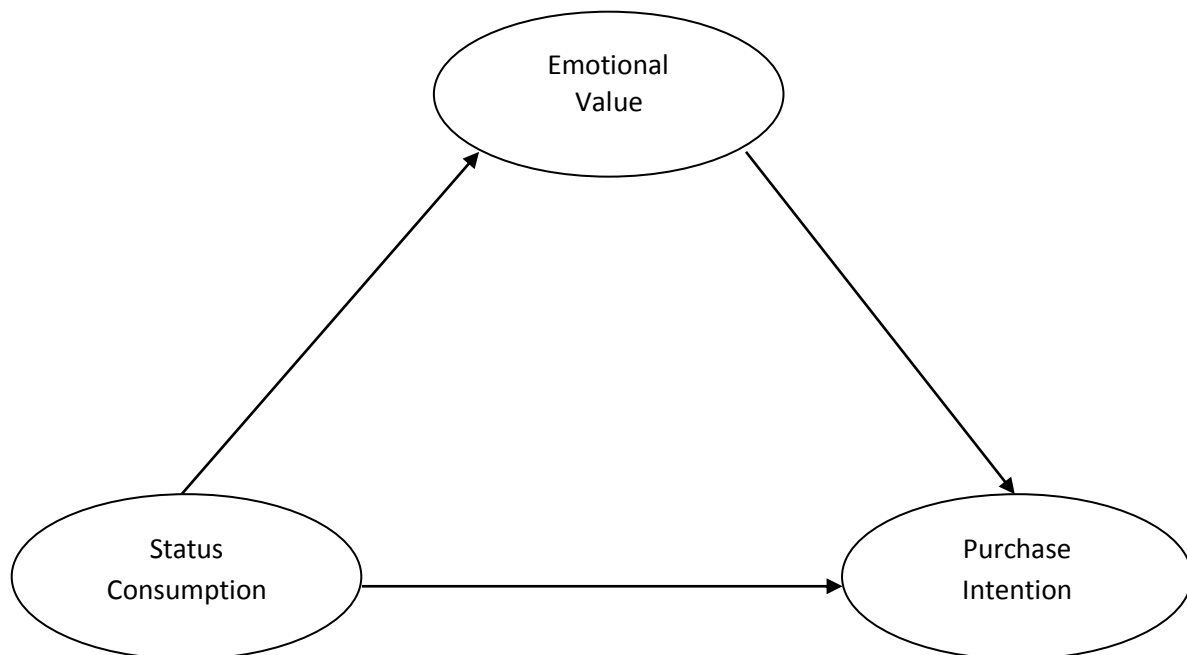
Status consumption (x) (Sig. 0.000, $\beta = .336$, $t = 7.132$).

Understanding (m) (Sig. 0.000, $\beta = .519$, $t = 7.132$).

A Sobel test was run to verify the findings. The test showed a test statistic of 5.248 and a p-value of $1.5e-7$, thus confirming the result and supporting the finding of a partial mediation. H9 is a partial mediation.

5.12.10 Mediation Analysis H10

Figure 5-0-14 Mediating Relationship



H10 analysed the relationship emotional value (m) has as a mediating variable between status consumption (x) and purchase intention (y). The following mediation analysis was conducted according to the four-step process proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986).

1. Regression analysis was conducted with status consumption (x) as the predictor variable and emotional value (y) as the dependent variable. The result was found to be significant (Sig. 0.00, $\beta = .471$, $t = 8.530$).
2. Regression analysis was conducted with status consumption (x) as the predictor variable and the mediating variable purchase intention (m) as the dependent. This relationship was found to be significant (Sig. 0.00, $\beta = .511$, $t = 9.492$).
3. The third regression analysis was conducted with the mediating variable emotional value (m) as the predictor variable and purchase intention (y) as the dependent variable. This analysis found a significant result (Sig. 0.000, $\beta = .732$, $t = 17.147$).
4. The final step in the regression analysis consists of using status consumption (x) and emotional value (m) as the predictor variables and purchase intention (y) as the dependent variable. This analysis found both status consumption (x) and emotional value (m) were significant, indicating a partial mediation.

Status consumption (x) (Sig. 0.000, $\beta = .214$, $t = 4.583$).

Emotional value (m) (Sig. 0.000, $\beta = .631$, $t = 13.547$).

A Sobel test was run to verify the finding of a partial mediation. The test showed a test statistic of 7.689 and a p-value of 0.000, thus confirming the significant result and supporting the finding of a partial mediation of H10.

5.12.11 Discussion

In summary, H6 and H7 looked at the impact emotional value and brand judgement had as mediating factors between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention. This mediation was conducted in accordance with the four-step process designed by Baron and Kenny (1986). As step 2 was non-significant, the four-step process was unable to be completed and thus it was determined H6 and H7 show no mediation, namely emotional value and brand judgement as mediating factors of consumers' need for uniqueness do not influence the purchase intention of an established haute couture luxury apparel brand. This is in opposition to Ryan (2008) who found a full mediation between consumers' need for uniqueness and emotional value and brand judgement, respectively. The difference in findings could be a result of the variation in product category between the two studies where luxury apparel has no direct or indirect pathways to purchase intention for uniqueness-seeking consumers.

The mediating effects emotional value had on the relationships between brand judgement and purchase intention was also investigated using the four-step process proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986). Emotional value was found to play a partial mediating role between the two constructs in accordance with the findings of Lee et al. (2008) in which emotional value was a mediating variable between perceived quality and purchase intention. In this study, it can be interpreted that positive brand judgement produces an emotional value that influences purchase intention together. This supports H8.

H9 and H10 proposed that the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention is mediated by brand judgement and emotional value, respectively. In other words, status-seeking consumers will only purchase a luxury apparel brand when brand perceptions (brand judgement and emotional value) exist. However, the results of the study show a partial mediation for both hypotheses, implying that brand perceptions can influence purchase intention but that they are not always necessary.

Table 5-0-23

Summary of the results H1 to H10

| Hypotheses (Christian Dior) | Findings |
|---|-----------------------------|
| <i>H1ai</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Supported |
| <i>H1aii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, resonance). | Supported |
| <i>H1aiii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Not Supported |
| <i>H1aiv</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, resonance). | Not Supported |
| <i>H1av</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Not Supported |
| <i>H1avi</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, resonance). | Not Supported |
| <i>H1bi</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Supported |
| <i>H1bii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported |
| <i>H1biii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, Unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported |
| <i>H2ai</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Supported |
| <i>H2aii</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, resonance). | Supported |
| <i>H2b</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Supported |
| <i>H3i</i> : Brand judgement (factor 1, understanding) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Supported |
| <i>H3ii</i> : Brand judgement (factor 2, resonance) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Supported |
| <i>H4ai</i> : Consumers' perception of judgement (factor 1, understanding) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Supported |
| <i>H4aii</i> : Consumers' perception of judgement (factor 2, resonance) significantly and positively influences purchase intention | Not Supported |
| <i>H4b</i> : Consumers' brand perceptions of emotional value significantly and positively influence purchase intention. | Supported |
| <i>H5ai</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported |
| <i>H5aii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported |
| <i>H5aiii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported |
| <i>H5b</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Supported |
| <i>H6</i> : Emotional value mediates the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention. | No Mediation |
| <i>H7</i> : Brand judgement mediates the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention. | No Mediation All factors |
| <i>H8</i> : Emotional value mediates the relationship between brand judgement (factor 1, understanding) and purchase. | Partial Mediation |
| <i>H9</i> : Brand judgement (factor 1, understanding) has a mediating effect between status consumption and purchase intention. | Partial Mediation |
| <i>H10</i> : Emotional value mediates the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention. | Partial Mediation |

5.13 Condition One and Condition Two Compared

Up until this point, the two conditions have been looked at exclusively. This section compares the findings for the hypotheses to ascertain differences or similarities between the conditions.

| Key | |
|-----|------------------------|
| | Findings are identical |
| | Findings differ |

5.13.1 H1a: Consumers' need for uniqueness significantly and positively influences brand judgement.

Table 5-0-24

| Hypotheses | Findings | |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| | Fictitious | Established |
| <i>H1ai</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H1aii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, attributes). | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H1aiii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 3, reputation). | Supported | |
| <i>H1aiv</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H1av</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, attributes). | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H1avi</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 3, reputation). | Not Supported | |
| <i>H1avii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H1aviii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, attributes). | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H1aix</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 3, reputation). | Not Supported | |

*Note: ‘resonance’ (condition 2 – established) is a combination of the items from attributes and reputation from the fictitious sample.

5.13.2 H1b: Consumers’ need for uniqueness significantly and positively influences emotional value.

Table 5-0-25

| Hypotheses | Findings | |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| | Fictitious | Established |
| H1bi: Consumers’ need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Supported | Supported |
| H1bii: Consumers’ need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| H1biii: Consumers’ need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported | Not Supported |

5.13.3 H2a: Status consumption significantly and positively influences brand judgement.

Table 5-0-26

| Hypotheses | Findings | |
|---|---------------|-------------|
| | Fictitious | Established |
| H2ai: Status consumption significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Supported | Supported |
| H2aai: Status consumption significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, attributes). | Not Supported | Supported |
| H2aai: Status consumption significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 3, reputation). | Not Supported | |

*Note: ‘resonance’ (condition 2 – established) is a combination of the items from attributes and reputation from the fictitious sample.

5.13.4 H2b: Status consumption significantly and positively influences emotional value.

Table 5-0-27

| Hypotheses | Findings | |
|--|---------------|-------------|
| | Fictitious | Established |
| H2b: Status consumption significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported | Supported |

5.13.5 Summary H1a and H2a

Multiple and stepwise regression analyses were used to explore the effects the constructs have on each other. Consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption were together regressed with brand judgement and then with emotional value. The results show a number of differences between the two conditions.

Under condition one, creative choice counter-conformity was the only consumers' need for uniqueness factor that was significantly related to understanding. Unpopular choice counter-conformity was also significant but against the direction of the hypothesis. All three factors of consumers' need for uniqueness were significant towards reputation, although factors 2 and 3 (avoidance of similarity and unpopular choice counter-conformity) were against the direction of the hypothesis, while only creative choice counter-conformity was significantly related to emotional value.

Condition two produced several different results. Creative choice counter-conformity and avoidance of similarity were significantly related to understanding and emotional value, although only creative choice counter-conformity held up as avoidance of similarity was against the direction of the hypothesis. Unpopular choice counter-conformity showed only a significant relationship with resonance but against the direction of the hypothesis. Creative choice counter-conformity was also the only significant determinant of resonance.

Status consumption was found to have a positive and significant relationship with brand judgement and emotional value for condition two only. This supports previous findings (Lee et al. 2008) that have shown that brand judgement and emotional value are influenced by status consumption, indicating the likelihood of consumers to purchase well-known clothing

brands in order to conform to the expectations of others or to achieve a sense of belonging. These results are also consistent with Shermach (1997), which found that consumers use brands for social acceptance, demonstrating how group affiliation can be promoted or identified through the use of a particular brand or product.

The positive relationship between the constructs suggests that Australian Generation Y consumers with a high need for status have a positive attitude towards an established and recognised luxury apparel brand only and consider the brand as providing high emotional value. In comparison, condition one, status consumption showed only a positive and significant relationship with understanding, which takes into account individual consumers' feelings in relation to the brand. This is ultimately separated from any distinguishing characteristics or related opinions of the brand. Thus, a fictitious brand is unable to form any connection with status consumers because of this lack of distinguishing and recognisable characteristics. This outcome represents some similarities with Sweeny and Soutar (2001), although not in the same research context.

Creative choice counter-conformity is significantly related to both brand perception measures (brand judgement and emotional value) for both conditions. This suggests that consumers with a high need to express their individuality and also conform to group norms are more likely to consider luxury apparel regardless of brand familiarity and recommend the brand to others. This result suggests that brand judgement differs according to the type of consumers' need for uniqueness, which supports the findings of Knight and Kim (2007) and Simonson and Nowls (2000) who found that brand image perceptions are influenced by consumers' need for uniqueness. Therefore, it can be concluded that no difference exists between a

fictitious and an established brand in relation to consumers' need for uniqueness; however, the same cannot be said in relation to status consumption or brand judgement.

5.13.6 H3: Brand judgement significantly and positively influences emotional value.

Table 5-0-28

| Hypotheses | Findings | |
|---|---------------|-------------|
| | Fictitious | Established |
| H3i: Brand judgement (factor 1, understanding) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Supported | Supported |
| H3ii: Brand judgement (factor 2, attributes) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Supported | Supported |
| H3iii: Brand judgement (factor 3, reputation) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported | |

*Note: 'resonance' (condition 2 – established) is a combination of the items from attributes and reputation from the fictitious sample.

5.13.7 Summary of H3

In summary, the results found that the relationship between brand judgement and emotional value under condition two had a significant and positive relationship for all measures. This supports previous findings by Lee et al. (2008), Ryan (2008), Knight and Kim (2007), Babin and Babin (2001) and Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), which found that emotional value influences the purchase decision through brand loyalty and effect.

Under condition one, however, reputation was shown to have a significant negative relationship. This can be attributed to the fact there is no subsequent knowledge from which to provide a foundation and thus develop an emotional response towards the given brand, thereby supporting the theory of brand equity (Keller 2001; Aaker 1996). This in real terms means that respondents who rated higher on reputation had less chance of having a positive emotional value towards the brand.

Understanding and attributes (condition one) had a significant and positive relationship with emotional value, which shows that positive brand judgement based on these two factors will increase emotional value to the brand. Finally, the output implies that fictitious and established brands cannot be approached in a unilateral way in relation to their brand judgements when appealing to emotion.

5.13.8 H4a: Consumers' perception of judgements of a brand significantly and positively influence purchase intention.

Table 5-0-29

| Hypotheses | Findings | |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| | Fictitious | Established |
| <i>H4ai</i> : Consumers' perception of judgement (factor 1, understanding) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H4aii</i> : Consumers' perception of judgement (factor 2, attributes) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H4aiii</i> : Consumers' perception of judgement (factor 3, reputation) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Supported | |

*Note: 'resonance' (condition 2 – established) is a combination of the items from attributes and reputation from the fictitious sample.

5.13.9 H4b: Consumers' brand perceptions of emotional value significantly and positively influence purchase intention.

Table 5-0-30

| Hypotheses | Findings | |
|---|------------|-------------|
| | Fictitious | Established |
| <i>H4b</i> : Consumers' brand perceptions of emotional value significantly and positively influence purchase intention. | Supported | Supported |

5.13.10 H5a: Consumers' need for uniqueness significantly and positively influences purchase intention.

Table 5-0-31

| Hypotheses | Findings | |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| | Fictitious | Established |
| <i>H5ai</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H5aii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H5aiii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported | Not Supported |

5.13.11 H5b: Status consumption significantly and positively influences purchase intention.

Table 5-0-32

| Hypotheses | Findings | |
|---|---------------|-------------|
| | Fictitious | Established |
| <i>H5b</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported | Supported |

5.13.12 Summary of H4 and H5

The effects consumers' need for uniqueness, status consumption, brand judgement and emotional value had on purchase intention were investigated using a stepwise regression method. Under condition one, emotional value was found to be the most significant factor, followed by understanding, reputation and avoidance of similarity. Status consumption, creative choice counter-conformity and unpopular choice counter-conformity were found to be non-significant. Reputation, although significant, was found to be negatively related to purchase intention, which means that respondents who rated the brand higher in regards to reputation are significantly less likely to intend to purchase.

Under condition two, it was found that status consumption, understanding and emotional value all had a significant and positive effect on purchase intention, while consumers' need for uniqueness and resonance were found to be non-significant. Furthermore, stepwise regression analysis showed that emotional value had the most significant relationship, followed by understanding and status consumption.

Consumers' need for uniqueness was found to be non-significant under condition two in influencing purchase intention directly. This finding is similar to Sweeney and Soutar who found that emotional attitude towards a brand is an important antecedent for consumers with a high need for uniqueness in the purchase of luxury apparel brands. Furthermore, the findings of Amaldoss and Jain (2005b) mirror this non-significant result, implying that consumers with a high need for uniqueness steer clear of luxury goods because of their desire for individuality, which explains the direct relationship with avoidance of similarity in condition one. Therefore, it can be concluded that differences exist between established and fictitious brands in relation to the factors consumers respond to in their intentions or willingness to purchase luxury apparel. Both conditions, however, express no differences in the direct relationship between emotional value and purchase intention, which is comparable with previous findings by Knight and Kim (2007) and Ryan (2008).

5.13.13 H6: Emotional value mediates the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention.

Table 5-0-33

| Hypotheses | Findings | |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Fictitious | Established |
| <i>H6</i> : Emotional value mediates the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention. | No Mediation All Factors | No Mediation All Factors |

5.13.14 H7: Brand judgement mediates the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention.

Table 5-0-34

| Hypotheses | Findings | |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Fictitious | Established |
| H7: Brand judgement mediates the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention. | No Mediation All Factors | No Mediation All Factors |

5.13.15 H8: Emotional value mediates the relationship between brand judgement and purchase intention.

Table 5-0-35

| Hypotheses | Findings | |
|---|---|---|
| | Fictitious | Established |
| H8: Emotional value mediates the relationship between brand judgement (factor 1, understanding) and purchase intention. | Partial Mediation Understanding Only | Partial Mediation Understanding Only |

5.13.16 H9: Brand judgement mediates the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention.

Table 5-0-36

| Hypotheses | Findings | |
|--|-----------------------------|---|
| | Fictitious | Established |
| H9: Brand judgement (factor 1, understanding) mediates the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention. | No Mediation All Factors | Partial Mediation Understanding Only |

5.13.17 H10: Emotional value mediates the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention.

Table 5-0-37

| Hypotheses | Findings | |
|---|--------------|-------------------|
| | Fictitious | Established |
| H10: Emotional value mediates the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention. | No Mediation | Partial Mediation |

5.13.18 Summary Mediation

H6 and H7 looked at the impact emotional value and brand judgement had as mediating factors between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention. This mediation was

conducted in accordance with the four-step process designed by Baron and Kenny (1986). As step 2 was non-significant, the four-step process was unable to be completed and thus it was determined that H6 and H7 show no mediation. In other words, emotional value and brand judgement as mediating factors of consumers' need for uniqueness do not influence the purchase intention of an haute couture luxury apparel brand, fictitious or established.

The next hypothesis, H8, looked at the mediating effects emotional value had on the relationships between brand judgement and purchase intention. The results found that emotional value played a partial mediating role between the two constructs (factor 1, understanding and purchase intention) under both conditions. It can be interpreted from these results under both conditions that a positive understanding of brand judgement produces an emotional value that influences the purchase intention of a fictitious and of an established haute couture luxury apparel brand together.

The final two mediating hypotheses, H9 and H10, proposed that the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention is mediated by brand judgement and emotional value, respectively. In other words, status-seeking consumers will only purchase a luxury apparel brand when brand perceptions (brand judgement and emotional value) exist. No mediation was carried out for condition one as the stepwise regression analysis showed no significance between status and purchase intention for this sample. However, the results of condition two show a partial mediation for both hypotheses, implying that brand perceptions (understanding) can influence purchase intention but that they are not always necessary for an established luxury apparel brand. Therefore, it can be concluded mediation differences exist only for status-related purchase intention between the two conditions.

| Key | |
|------------|------------------------|
| | Findings are identical |
| | Findings differ |

Table 5-0-38

Summary of Hypotheses H1 to H10 Combined

| Hypotheses | Findings | |
|---|-----------------|---------------|
| | Fictitious | Established |
| <i>H1ai</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H1aii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, attributes). | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H1aiii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 3, reputation). | Supported | |
| <i>H1aiv</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H1av</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, attributes). | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H1avi</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 3, reputation). | Not Supported | |
| <i>H1avii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H1aviii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, attributes). | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H1aix</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 3, reputation). | Supported | |
| <i>H1bi</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H1bii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H1biii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H2ai</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Supported | Supported |

| | | |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>H2aii</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, attributes). | Not Supported | Supported |
| <i>H2aii</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 3, reputation). | Not Supported | |
| <i>H2b</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported | Supported |
| <i>H3i</i> : Brand judgement (factor 1, understanding) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H3ii</i> : Brand judgement (factor 2, attributes) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H3iii</i> : Brand judgement (factor 3, reputation) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported | |
| <i>H4ai</i> : Consumers' perception of judgement (factor 1, understanding) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H4aii</i> : Consumers' perception of judgement (factor 2, attributes) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H4aiii</i> : Consumers' perception of judgement (factor 3, reputation) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Supported | |
| <i>H4b</i> : Consumers' brand perceptions of emotional value significantly and positively influence purchase intention. | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H5ai</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H5aii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H5aiii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H5b</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported | Supported |
| <i>H6</i> : Emotional value mediates the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention. | No Mediation | No Mediation |
| <i>H7</i> : Brand judgement mediates the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention. | No Mediation All Factors | No Mediation All Factors |
| <i>H8</i> : Emotional value mediates the relationship between brand judgement (factor 1, understanding) and purchase intention. | Partial Mediation | Partial Mediation |
| <i>H9</i> : Brand judgement (factor 1, understanding) mediates the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention. | No Mediation All Factors | Partial Mediation |
| <i>H10</i> : Emotional value mediates the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention. | No Mediation | Partial Mediation |

*Note: 'resonance' (condition 2 – established) is a combination of the items from attributes and reputation from the fictitious sample.

5.14 Concluding Comments

Testing the data showed statistically significant results. In the following chapter, conclusions will be drawn with regards to whether the research objectives and main research problem have been adequately addressed. A presentation of the findings will be discussed along with

the theoretical, managerial and methodological implications. The limitations of the study as well as areas for future research will also be presented.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5, the results of the data analysis were reported and discussed. In this chapter, the conclusions are drawn, the limitations of this study are presented and the implications of this study on researchers and practitioners are described. This chapter also provides a general discussion of the theoretical and managerial contributions and concludes with the avenues for future research.

6.2 Discussion

This study was undertaken to examine the effects consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption have on purchase intention by focusing on Australian Generation Y consumers. This study specifically tested consumers' need for uniqueness, status consumption, brand judgement and emotional value as antecedents of purchase intention to an established and a fictitious haute couture luxury apparel brand. The mediation effects between the constructs were also tested. A summary of the results can be seen in Table 6-0-1

The results indicated that the brand judgement scale could be used in both samples, although deviations exist in the two conditions. Through the confirmatory factor analysis, it was found that brands without pre-existing connotations must separate out reputation-related items, as

the results show that quality and brand equity are not factors when the brand is unfamiliar in the market.

In order to study the influence these constructs had on each other, scales were modified to measure the individual constructs. These scales were identified in Chapter 4. The 63 items that represented the five constructs examined with factor analysis and the resulting factors were found to have a stable structure and a high correlation with their underlying factors. Cronbach's alpha values also indicated that all factors were reliable.

The previous literature highlighted a number of key areas that had either not been studied before or have been studied in a limited capacity. In particular, a lack of Australian studies that used a Generation Y sample were identified. In this study, Australian Generation Y consumers were found to have similar findings to Japanese Generation Y consumers (Knight and Kim 2007) in that they both use brands to fulfil their needs for uniqueness and individuality and that their brand image perceptions were influenced by their need for uniqueness. Similarly, consumers' need for uniqueness for both Australian Generation Y and Japanese Generation Y consumers can be classified into three types, namely creative choice counter-conformity, unpopular choice counter-conformity and avoidance of similarity, thus supporting Ruvio, Shoham and Brencic's (2008) cross-cultural validation of the consumers' need for uniqueness scale.

A variation in the results was found between Korean Generation Y consumers and Australian Generation Y consumers. Korean Generation Y consumers were found to have a positive relationship between the need for uniqueness and the usage of global luxury brands, whereas

no similar relationship was found for two Australian Generation Y consumers' need for uniqueness, unpopular choice counter-conformity and avoidance of similarity (condition two).

The difference in these findings can be explained in several ways. First, the finding could be put down to cultural factors in that Korean consumers see established global luxury brands as unique and Australian consumers view them, particularly Christian Dior, as well-established and socially determined. This hostility towards global luxury products as symbols of individuality held by Australian consumers is supported by research findings. The findings show avoidance of similarity and unpopular choice counter-conformity have a significant but negative relationship with brand perceptions (brand judgement and emotional value), which ultimately means the higher the need for these two types of consumers' need for uniqueness the less favourable their disposition towards the brand is.

Hofstede's (2009) cultural dimensions show that Korea has a low tolerance of uncertainty and is highly risk-averse, thus making established luxury brands a strong symbol of differentiation. By contrast, Australia ranks second to the United States in individuality, which influences daily life by making recognisable brands undesirable. Either of these reasons could account for the variation in the level of perceived uniqueness for global luxury brands when Korea and Australia are placed in direct comparison, and future research should examine these possibilities further.

The results of this study are similar to Amaldoss and Jain (2005a) who found that American consumers steer clear of the purchase of established luxury and high quality goods because of their desire for uniqueness. Existing research has also found that Europeans and Americans prefer uniqueness more than do East Asians (Aaker and Schmitt 2001; Kim and Markus 1999), which supports the notion that the findings are culturally determined. Previous research has suggested that although lifestyle similarities are present in Generation Y consumers globally, the importance of national culture, political structure and geographical distance all play an equally important role (Rajamma et al. 2010). Previous research on cultural differentiation has tended to use Western brands, and thus Eastern consumers could view these as unique in the same way Western consumers could view Eastern brands as unique. Future studies could examine the impact of the country of origin of the brand on consumers' need for uniqueness.

The research findings further indicate that consumers with a favourable attitude towards luxury apparel or the brand in general will be more likely to purchase luxury apparel and accessories (Husic and Cicic 2009; Ryan 2008; Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith 2006). This is underpinned by Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour, which reflects different attitude formation variables (self-efficacy and intention to comply) and subjective norm variables (group expectations). In addition, the results show that consumers' intention to purchase established luxury apparel can be moderated by emotional value in order to yield different results in terms of consumer evaluation. In particular, under the circumstances there was a significant difference in purchase intention when consumers had to evaluate between the types of uniqueness motivations and status consumption.

Subjective norms also played a large role in determining purchase intention; consumers' need for uniqueness factors, avoidance of similarity and unpopular choice counter-conformity involved the avoidance of mainstream products and products considered outside group norms, which were found to be non-significant with emotional value and directly with purchase intention. Therefore, the research findings show that consumers tend to have higher purchase intentions towards luxury apparel products, in particular Christian Dior, if they are considered within their subjective norms. The result shows some similarity with those of Knight and Kim (2007), although not in the same research context.

Previous studies of the effect of uniqueness and status on the consumption of fashion products have used generic fashion products rather than a particular brand or product (Park, Kim, and Forney 2006; Amaldoss and Jain 2005b; Chao and Schor 1998). Using a particular brand or product increases the involvement and reliability of the study. Park, Kim and Forney (2006) found similar results with their study of generic clothing, where consumers who had a high involvement were more likely to consume in order to fulfil hedonic needs.

Hedonic consumption was also seen to relate to the emotional value of products, and the present study extends this research in that participants identified their needs of uniqueness or status consumption and related them to a specific brand, fictitious or established. This result implies that the hedonic needs of Generation Y consumers are a more important antecedent of determining the purchase of an established luxury apparel brand compared with emotional value. This is because two factors of consumers' need for uniqueness (avoidance of similarity and unpopular choice counter-conformity) were not significantly related to emotional value and status consumption was shown to have a partial mediation between emotional value and purchase intention for the established brand only (condition two). The use of a specific brand

and product category fulfils gap (d) identified in Chapter 2 and increases the reliability of the findings, enabling them to be utilised within a given product category.

This research has advanced the literature on consumers' need for uniqueness within Australia. It has integrated a number of concepts into the research while applying it to a country that has had little written about it in terms of how its consumers react to unique clothing and brands, especially in relation to luxury apparel. The significance of this study highlights new insights into how various constructs on consumer attitudes and purchase behaviour affect consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption. Furthermore, the study has drawn attention to a number of issues that should be further researched and applied to business and academic fields in order to improve the marketing of luxury apparel brands and to enrich the perspective of the need for uniqueness and status consumption. The following section highlights the theoretical, methodological and managerial contributions of the study.

Table 6-0-1

Summary of the results (H1 to H10)

| Key | |
|------------|------------------------|
| | Findings are identical |
| | Findings differ |

| Hypotheses | Findings | |
|---|-----------------|---------------|
| | Fictitious | Established |
| <i>H1ai</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H1aii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, attributes). | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H1aiii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 3, reputation). | Supported | |
| <i>H1aiv</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H1av</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, attributes). | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H1avi</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 3, reputation). | Not Supported | |
| <i>H1avii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H1aviii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, attributes). | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H1aix</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 3, reputation). | Supported | |
| <i>H1bi</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H1bii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H1biii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H2ai</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 1, understanding). | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H2aii</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 2, attributes). | Not Supported | Supported |

| | | |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>H2aii</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences brand judgement (factor 3, reputation). | Not Supported | |
| <i>H2b</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported | Supported |
| <i>H3i</i> : Brand judgement (factor 1, understanding) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H3ii</i> : Brand judgement (factor 2, attributes) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H3iii</i> : Brand judgement (factor 3, reputation) significantly and positively influences emotional value. | Not Supported | |
| <i>H4ai</i> : Consumers' perception of judgement (factor 1, understanding) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H4aii</i> : Consumers' perception of judgement (factor 2, attributes) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H4aiii</i> : Consumers' perception of judgement (factor 3, reputation) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Supported | |
| <i>H4b</i> : Consumers' brand perceptions of emotional value significantly and positively influence purchase intention. | Supported | Supported |
| <i>H5ai</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 1, creative choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H5aii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 2, avoidance of similarity) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H5aiii</i> : Consumers' need for uniqueness (factor 3, unpopular choice counter-conformity) significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported | Not Supported |
| <i>H5b</i> : Status consumption significantly and positively influences purchase intention. | Not Supported | Supported |
| <i>H6</i> : Emotional value mediates the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention. | No Mediation | No Mediation |
| <i>H7</i> : Brand judgement mediates the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness and purchase intention. | No Mediation All Factors | No Mediation All Factors |
| <i>H8</i> : Emotional value mediates the relationship between brand judgement (factor 1, understanding) and purchase intention. | Partial Mediation | Partial Mediation |
| <i>H9</i> : Brand judgement (factor 1, understanding) mediates the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention. | No Mediation All Factors | Partial Mediation |
| <i>H10</i> : Emotional value mediates the relationship between status consumption and purchase intention. | No Mediation | Partial Mediation |

*Note: 'intuition' (condition 2 – established) is a combination of the items from attributes and reputation from the fictitious sample.

6.3 Contributions of the Study

The significant theoretical, methodological and managerial contributions of this study are discussed below.

6.3.1 Theoretical Contributions

The theoretical implications of this research extend beyond the consumer choice literature to the social psychology of identity on a broader spectrum. Theories of conformity, social identity and uniqueness have a long and rich history in psychology (Goldsmith and Clark 2008; Snyder 1992; Belk 1988 et al.), and this study contributes to understanding how these related literatures can be interwoven. This research provides insight into decision-making and behaviour when there are conflicts between the motivation to conform or to seek differentiation.

The present study extends the application of consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption into the domain of luxury brands using an haute couture luxury apparel brand as the stimulus. This allows it to extend from areas regarding branded fashion apparel conceptually the same as other brands in the same category to branded fashion apparel utilising a one-off customisation approach. Haute couture creates the illusion through brand association that accessories (bags, scarves, sunglasses etc.) are as exclusive as the couture products at the premium end of the range. Couture generates high levels of publicity, which then funnel down into sales in the ready-to-wear and mass production stages (Catry 2003). "Haute couture is notoriously unprofitable for design houses but a necessity in appealing to those who aspire to have \$100,000 custom-made dresses with more moderately priced designs. The notion is that a luxury brand must appeal to the *crème de la crème* of clientele in

order for less sophisticated consumers to find their wares attractive” (Han, Nunes, and Dreze 2010, 27).

In this study, haute couture luxury apparel was used as the medium for the print stimulus, which featured designs from Christian Dior. The consumers’ need for uniqueness scale, developed by Tian, Bearden and Hunter (2001), can be divided into three distinct factors, identical to the original scale, indicating the scale’s cross-cultural validity along with inter-scale validity when transferred to different product classes, including in this case haute couture. Further studies into the customisation of haute couture may be conducted to test the reliability and validity of this finding. This finding is important as it allows scholars to see the continued validity and reliability cross-culturally and offers an extension of the variety of products that the scale measures.

These results also illustrate the necessity of not testing consumers’ need for uniqueness as a unified concept (Ryan 2008; Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith 2007) if a higher degree of rigour is desired. The results show, as mentioned earlier, that these three factors (unpopular choice counter-conformity, creative choice counter-conformity and avoidance of similarity) all yielded different findings in regards to emotional value and brand judgement as shown in hypothesis 1 (conditions one and two), leading to the conclusion that testing consumers’ need for uniqueness as a unified concept may produce unreliable results.

This study also looks at status consumption by the Generation Y population as opposed to adult consumers between the ages of 30–50 who have traditionally been considered the prime target market for luxury brands (Phau and Cheong 2009). The results indicate that Generation Y consumers with a high need for status have both a direct and an indirect path (through

brand perceptions) to purchase intention (condition two). This shows the willingness of young consumers to purchase luxury apparel brands. A more proactive approach should be taken towards young consumers and luxury brands compared with the traditional age group of 30–50 year olds (Phau and Cheong 2009). Higher levels of disposable income have created a new emerging market that is susceptible to the allure of luxury apparel.

This research supports Keller's (1993) theory of customer-based brand equity, which is underpinned by the notion that different outcomes result from the marketing of a product because of its brand name in comparison to a product lacking brand identification. The results show that purchase motivation varies based on brand name associations alone. Conditions one and two varied based on brand logo and name only and produced several different outcomes. Fictitious or newly establishing brands have a greater appeal to uniqueness-seeking consumers but they do not appeal to consumers seeking status. In comparison, established brands have a predominately negative relationship with uniqueness-seeking consumers but they appeal heavily to those interested in status. These findings add weight to previous research and provide a foundation for which established and newly establishing brands can follow.

Finally, as mentioned previously, this study offer an alternative cultural perspective on consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption, which in this case is the Asian-Pacific region. Previous studies have been conducted in Northern Asia (O'Cass and Choy 2008; Park, Rabolt, and Jeon 2008; Knight and Kim 2007) and the US (Amaldoss and Jain 2005b), and this adds to the continual study of consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption. Although Australia is not ranked in the top 10 in regards to number of luxury stores, a recent boom has seen a vast a majority of labels enter or expand into the Australian

market over the past 12 months (Epp April 29, 2011; Meagher April 6, 2011). The newly established TAG Heuer store in Sydney is their number one performing store in the world (Meagher April 6, 2011). Further, Epp (April 29, 2011) states that having multiple stores in Australian cities is now commonplace for luxury retailers. Therefore, this research is an important step for this emerging market.

6.3.2 Methodological Contributions

This study creates an important start for future research to measure consumers' need for uniqueness in relation to status consumption. It used a sound methodology developed predominately from previous studies to test consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption. This methodology could be used in future studies to establish the effects other consumables have on consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption.

Although the findings of this research are market-specific, they have important implications for general fashion consumption research. This research demonstrated the value of the consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption scales in explaining fashion adoption behaviour.

Furthermore, the present research is based on a modelling concept that identifies key antecedents and mediators with regard to consumers' purchase intentions towards an haute couture luxury apparel brand's ready-to-wear range. It expanded on the research model used by Knight and Kim (2007) to add status consumption as an antecedent variable and utilised their suggestion to add brand judgement. Stepwise regression analysis along with linear regression, multiple regression and hierarchical regression analyses were undertaken to

examine the effects of mediation on the hypothesised relationship between the independent construct, consumers' need for uniqueness, and the dependent construct, purchase intention. The results of this mediation analysis showed no significance for both the established and the fictitious brand and thus they counter the previous research by Ryan (2008) using an identical model. Very few studies within the marketing literature on consumers' need for uniqueness have drawn on such rigorous analytical techniques. This study has the potential to open a new area of research that examines and compares how modelling concepts and constructs can affect future studies in this field. It also provide a basis for comparison to which future studies can compare a variety of fashion goods.

An emerging contribution was the division of the brand judgement scale. The results indicated that the brand judgement scale could be used in both samples, although deviations exist in the two conditions. Through exploratory factor analysis, it was found that brands without pre-existing connotations must separate out reputation-related items, as the results show that quality and the brand's apparent knowledge are not factors when the brand is unknown. In order to allow for direct comparison between established brands and new or emerging brands a more unified scale is necessary. This is an important methodological finding, as established and fictitious brands cannot be measured concurrently using the same scale.

This research has identified two separate and comprehensive models to test both established brands and new or establishing brands. The development of an individual model for both established and new or establishing brands using the factored brand judgement scale adds

another methodological contribution to the literature. Future studies may replicate this model when researching other areas.

6.3.3 Managerial Contributions

The results of this study have developed certain important implications for the industry and for marketers. First, the study supports the belief that exposure to a luxury apparel brand can prompt brand judgement and emotional responses in status-seeking consumers. This can be seen throughout hypothesis 2 in the significant difference in the results of status-seeking consumers compared with uniqueness-seeking consumers under both conditions. These emotional and cognitive reflections are shown to have an effect on the thought-processing activity and formation of purchase intention towards the brand. As status consumers operate within the confines of normative group influence (Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith 2007), brands should target consumers with visible predictors of prestige and use advertisements where products are being consumed in a group setting or in situations that imply group approval. This is consistent with the findings of Shermach (1997) who found that consumers use brands for social acceptance, group affiliation and membership through the use and display of particular brands or products. This means retailers should capitalise on the need for group approval and encourage the involvement of others when shopping or purchasing. Brands should create a link with consumers that allows owners to feel validated in their choices, especially for high priced prestigious products.

According to Shermach (1997), brands such as Christian Dior are pinnacle brands, where the longing to buy them can start in childhood, and buying them becomes a fulfilment of a fantasy. Long-term longing can pay off, so the emergence of Generation Y consumers as an important market segment offers brands the ability to make an impression on these

consumers so they will continually select the brand as they get older and as their incomes rise. In opposition, this segment could be targeted through their parents or significant others through advertisements depicting group affiliation for this age group, for example, through an advertisement of a valedictorian being presented with the brand as a symbol of their achievement.

This study focused on Australian Generation Y consumers' purchase intentions of a luxury apparel brand and found that deviations exist between Australian Generation Y consumers and the Generation Y consumers previously studied (Northern Asia and the United States). This finding implies that global luxury apparel brands should not utilise the same campaigns globally but rather should target campaigns specifically to individual countries or countries found to have similar interests.

These findings help identify specifically what attracts consumers to purchase luxury apparel brands. This enables managers in the industry to categorise their clientele into market segments with similar interests. For instance, since the research suggested that two types of consumers' need for uniqueness, namely avoidance of similarity and unpopular choice counter-conformity, did not have any purchase intention towards the established luxury apparel brand (Christian Dior), specific communication strategies need to be developed to address these different needs. It is also more likely that these consumers would benefit from a diffusion brand, similar to Prada and Miu Miu, in which Miu Mui was targeted towards younger consumers at more affordable cost but continued to follow the same aesthetic approach (Grosvenor 2008). This approach allows the parent brand (in this case Prada) to tailor its collection to the niche market while still capitalising on the mass market appeal through its diffusion brand (Miu Mui). Catry (2003) suggests that the less the two lines are

connected, the less the market opener brand will impact on the niche appeal of the parent. One brand means rarity, while the other copes with mass luxury demand.

This finding also highlights the importance of subjective norms towards purchase intention, underpinned by Azjen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour in which subjective norms account for the perceived social pressure to conform or revolt. Consumers who desire social differentiation through the consumption of products that are acceptable to others are more likely to buy a well-known brand to distinguish themselves than consumers who steer clear of mainstream products or brands easily identifiable to the average consumer. Theoretically, this means brands may be able to counter the aversion to purchase for those consumers who desire a sense of uniqueness through minimal advertising or exclusive customised direct mail, which would reduce the likelihood of the general consumer being able to recognise the product as part of the brand. This can be considered to align with the principle of the more successful you are the bigger the risk of destroying your niche market (Vuitton bags the affluent customers: How luxury goods companies woo the wealthy 2005) and falls back on the rarity principle in which the consumer values products that offer a sense of exclusivity and scarcity as they offer more intrinsic value (Snyder 1992). This is also alluded to by Veblen (1994 [1899], 45) in that the purchase and consumption of products is a "consumption directed to the comfort of the consumer himself". In other words, it is not the product itself the consumer is purchasing but the benefits associated with ownership. This principle is employed by Hugo Boss, namely the higher the price of the suit or item the smaller the label is, which counteracts the third factor of consumers' need for uniqueness, avoidance of similarity. In other words, the avoidance of mainstream products (Knight and Kim 2007; Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001) in that the product becomes so exclusive that it is no longer seen as a mainstream product.

Previous research (Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2001; Keller 2001, 1993; Aaker 1991, 1996) has shown the importance of branding in making or breaking the brand and its subsequent fiscal longevity. Brand equity has long been essential for success. However, the results show that consumers with a need for uniqueness show a significant purchase intention both directly and indirectly through brand perceptions (brand judgement and emotional value) to a fictitious luxury apparel brand. This means new or establishing brands in the luxury market can target consumers with a need for uniqueness without the need for conventional brand equity. Creative choice counter-conformity and unpopular choice counter-conformity encapsulate consumers who like to stay on-trend but revel in separating themselves from the group. Limiting mainstream advertising would be ideal to continue to target this group.

In brand management practice, brand image and brand awareness are considered to be the central brand variables for assuring the effectiveness of marketing campaigns (Esch 2006). However, the results show that it is possible to illicit an emotional response from a new or establishing brand based on understanding and attributes, which includes items that take into account how the individual respondent feels the brand takes their feelings into consideration and what are considered to be the distinguishing characteristics of the brand. Esch (2006) also finds in a study of current and future purchases that brand knowledge does not affect intended purchase directly. The managers of new or establishing brands can take some relief in the knowledge that as long as their product fits within the schema the consumer is after, then pre-existing brand knowledge is secondary.

This research has demonstrated that brand familiarity can influence the type of purchase behaviour. Based on this, brands need to decide which avenue is most suited to them, as ostentatious well-established brands show a negative relationship with consumers' need for

uniqueness under two factors, avoidance of similarity and unpopular choice counter-conformity. The research shows that uniqueness-seeking consumers make up a large proportion of the market, leaving brands to decide whether to continue targeting a primarily status market or to use differentiation tactics or diffusion brands to gain territory in this market segment. Differentiation tactics that could be employed include the mass customisation of products, such as using a self-design system to allow consumers to personalise by adding colours and distinguishing features to design a product that suits individual preferences. Many companies in the consumer market have set up mass customisation systems, including Dell, Nike, General Mills and Louis Vuitton. Italian luxury brand Salvatore Ferragamo offers a made-to-order service in India, although not on a mass customised level, for a collection of men's shoes called Tramezza. The service allows consumers to choose all the details to design the shoe, from the colour and style of the leather right down to the laces. Customisation is also embedded into the shoe itself with the creators personalised initials crafted on the soles. "These beautiful objects know no rivals, no copies, and give their owners the euphoric feeling of having played a major part in creating a work of art" (Dewan August 26, 2007), thus capturing the avoidance of similarity segment.

Along with a mass customisation approach, another recommendation towards targeting consumers with unpopular choice counter-conformity is to offer a diffusion brand that appeals to consumers who like to push the boundaries in order to establish their uniqueness. Louis Vuitton has recently developed an haute couture jewellery line in which jewellery is elaborately and custom-designed to suit the individual. This allows those consumers who willingly risk social disapproval to have an item or piece unique to them while still being seen to be operating outside the confines of normative influence.

Price can determine a brand's status and thus its degree of exclusivity. The use of exclusive events, product ranges and floors to differentiate between walk-in consumers and frequent consumers can also be used to target both uniqueness-seeking consumers (unpopular choice counter-conformity, creative choice counter-conformity and avoidance of similarity) and status-seeking consumers. It operates on the notion that selected product ranges and floors within a luxury boutique become off limits (or seem to be off limits) to general consumers and thus the products are not well known outside designated circles. This increases the sense of exclusivity associated with products within these ranges, allows differentiation through acceptable products and allows a consumer to avoid mainstream products (through the perception of scarcity).

Companies in the luxury apparel market face the question of whether exclusivity, central to luxury appeal, is inevitably diluted by increased market share. The results have shown, as mentioned previously, that status consumption and only a single factor of consumers' need for uniqueness (creative choice counter-conformity) was shown to be significant towards the purchase intention of an established luxury apparel brand. To target these consumers as well as the two non-significant factors of consumers' need for uniqueness (avoidance of similarity and unpopular choice counter-conformity) the notion of information rarity should be employed. Information rarity is where luxury apparel companies rely on the information communicated to consumers rather than actual scarcity.

First, to avoid being linked to mass-produced consumer products, luxury apparel managers should utilise public relations initiatives and special events over traditional advertising. This tool has the ability to target more specific and limited consumer segments (e.g. Alfa-Romeo with the Sydney Harbour sailing race and David Jones with fashions on the field). The extent

and impact of the media coverage generated by this public relations would be two-fold: the power of the event and the prestige of the brand. As an established luxury apparel brand, Christian Dior has built a reputation on exclusivity and prestige, meaning it is likely to gain superior press returns (Catry 2003) as would other luxury apparel brands in the same category.

Second, as mentioned previously, price is one of the key indicators picked up by the market to symbolise exclusivity and prestige: the higher the price, the more selective the purchase seems to be (Catry 2003). An information alternative to stimulate brand image rarity without limiting sales would be to follow in Tiffany's footsteps and offer a mix of mass market products with luxury ones in a luxury environment. This simply means window displays and any promotional material advertise the premium and highly priced products but continue to sell mass-produced and lesser priced items in store. This allows the brand to be portrayed as exclusive, thus alluding to a sense of rarity without being limited in a physical sense.

As illustrated above, the selection of advertised products and prices is a key element to the prestige and exclusivity of brand image. According to Catry (2003), many luxury brands keep and promote 'star models' even though they may represent a very small proportion of turnover. "Hermes saddles or Louis Vuitton trunks are virtually mythical products making less than one per cent of the brands' sales for example" (Catry 2003, 16). These products are consistently promoted and owing to low sales figures rarely seen by the consumer, which adds to the illusion of rarity and the perception of scarcity. However, the established luxury apparel brand (Christian Dior) does not have a signature or 'star model' that could be introduced to play on the notion of scarcity that status-seeking and uniqueness-seeking consumers desire.

The inclusion of an item that gauges the tendency to recommend the product has led to the possibility that those who purchase the ready-to-wear ranges of both the established (Christian Dior) and the fictitious (Benedicte Caravaggio, as a pseudo for new or establishing brands) brands may also provide word-of-mouth promotion. This has often been recognised as a strong benefit of having strong customer-based brand equity (Keller 2008; Pappu, Quester, and Cooksey 2005; Keller 2001). Word of mouth is a valuable source of promotion and it should be capitalised through various marketing techniques such as database marketing, referral customers, exclusive parties or allowing members to view new lines prior to the general public. Exclusive clubs make users feel they are different or cutting edge (Shermach 1997), adding to a sense of personal prestige and feeling of superiority. However, the brand needs to ensure that the club does not become part of the mainstream, as this can diminish these feelings.

The presented results show that a large percentage of participants still purchase from traditional department stores (57.5%) compared with 27.6% who said they would shop at Christian Dior and 12.6% who said they would shop at Benedicte Caravaggio, the significance of which cannot be overlooked. This offers directions for established and new or establishing brands in making retail strategies specific to Australia, in particular to Generation Y consumers. Unfortunately, it has been suggested that selling through multiple department stores could in fact damage the exclusive aura created around luxury brands of this calibre. However, a subtle approach may actually prove beneficial through the use of selected upmarket department stores that carry products of the same calibre and price point, as they are able to transfer a certain image of prestige to the brand (Amaldoss and Jain 2005a). Louis Vuitton (2009) products are primarily available at authentic Louis Vuitton boutiques, which also includes boutiques operating independently within selected department

stores. This allows for the maintenance of the exclusive image and control over the product range while capitalising on the avenue department stores offer. Christian Dior, and in particular new or establishing luxury apparel brands, could follow this direction when making retail strategies.

As alluded to by Knight and Kim (2007), this research has shown that the Internet can be seen as a growing avenue of development with 18.3% of participants indicating they had made or make clothing purchases over the Internet and 17.2% of participants indicating they had made or make accessories purchases online. The results of the current research as well as those of previous research indicate that when consumers make luxury purchases normative influence is an influencing factor (Goldsmith and Clark 2008; Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith 2007). Babin and Babin (2001) find that retail consumers take store name, location and the appearance of salespeople into account when they decide on entering and purchasing items from a store. Taking into account the high levels of normative influence luxury brands should look at offering a similar experience to stepping into an actual store but over the Internet. They should look to create an experience that can offer the involvement of significant others coupled with the recognition of conspicuously consuming, packages delivered, for example, to workplaces instead of residential addresses. Louis Vuitton (2009), for example, offers customers the option of having a 'chat with an advisor', adding a tangible component to the online purchase experience. Retailers could also explore the use of online chat rooms and message boards similar to the suggestion by Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith (2007). This would allow status consumers to gauge group approval and satisfy their needs for group interaction.

6.4 Limitations and Future Research Directions

These results contribute substantially to our understanding of both status consumption and consumers' need for uniqueness. However, the study has certain limitations. First, as demonstrated in Chapter 5, the brand judgement scale did not allow for a direct comparison between the two conditions. This is both a limitation to the study, in that given aspects of brand judgement could not be compared, and a future research direction. Measures could be developed in the future to measure established and not yet established brands concurrently, thereby allowing for direct comparisons.

Second, this study is restricted by its sample frame. The use of a student sample with the majority of the fieldwork carried out in a large Western Australian university may be a limitation to the generalisability of this study's findings. Future research should be conducted with a sample more representative of the entire Australian Generation Y consumer population. These findings may reflect the sentiments of the student sample but might not reflect other groups of consumers as well. Nonetheless, this research has provided a foundation from which to examine consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption in relation to each other. Future studies may wish to test the constructs broken down into demographic variables or alternatively psychographic variables. A gender breakdown, for example, may reveal that men and women have differing status- and uniqueness-seeking tendencies, which could enable a more targeted strategy. Similar to demographic segmentation, psychographic segmentation may find that lower socioeconomic status-seeking consumers spend significantly more than higher socioeconomic status-seeking consumers or purchase items with a higher frequency, thus enabling the implementation of campaigns that resonate strongly with this target market. Future research might also examine whether or under what circumstances one motivation may supersede the other, either in terms of how

strongly it influences choice or in the sequence in which motivations are considered in the decision-making process. This research shows that both consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption motivations can be satisfied simultaneously through a single consumer choice; however, the order in which each motivation is considered and the dimensions of choice evaluated may differ across individuals and situations. This could help establish whether marketers should push certain aspects into the foreground.

Generalisations must be drawn with caution as the brands and the product category chosen for the purpose of the research are limited. This study used a clothing brand (Christian Dior) and category usually associated with symbolic and hedonic attributes, which may have resulted in a greater influence of emotional value on purchase intention. Future studies can be extended to other consumer products, for example, antiques or personal electronic devices, which are conspicuously utilised and consumed.

Furthermore, the model developed for this study examined the relationships consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption had on brand perceptions (brand judgement and emotional value) in accordance with purchase intention. Significant relationships were found for a number of pathways, as shown in Table 6-1; however, the co-relationship between the two primary constructs was examined through secondary research and not primary. Future research could look at using regression analysis to identify if a relationship exists. Additionally, structural equation modelling could be used to ascertain any casual connections between the variables in the model and various auxiliary assumptions (Sobel 1987). This would enable future research to determine whether the variables (consumers' need for uniqueness, status consumption, brand judgement, emotional value and purchase intention) are endogenous, "their behaviour depends stochastically on the operation of the system"

(Sobel 1987, 156) or they are in fact exogenous, determined outside the operation of the system (Sobel 1987).

In addition, future studies should examine the impact of the country of origin of the brand on consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption. As discussed earlier, different cultures have distinct perceptions on their needs for uniqueness and status in relation to luxury apparel and fashion in general. This research did not explicitly use country of origin as a cue, as it was outside the scope of the study but rather it relied on consumers' previous knowledge of the selected luxury apparel brand (Christian Dior). Country-of-origin studies would enable researchers to determine the extent consumers take traditional Mecca's of fashion into account when they are purchasing for uniqueness or status and whether country of origin is obsolete when it comes to fashion purchased purely for aesthetic and self-fulfilment purposes.

As also discussed earlier, price has been found to be both an indicator of quality and the amount of sacrifice necessary to purchase a product (O'Cass and Lim 2002). Scitovszky (1945) argued that price and perceived quality are positively related because of the consumer's understanding of supply and demand, where a higher price or perceived expensiveness signals a higher perceived quality to consumers. At the same time, the higher price represents a monetary measure of what must be sacrificed to purchase the good or service, which results in a reduced willingness to buy (O'Cass and Lim 2002) or as shown in the study with status consumers an increased purchase intention. This study alluded to high prices in terms of purchase intention but did not look at specific prices relative to purchase intention; future studies should look at the impact price has on purchase intention.

Future research could look into the possibility that consumers seek uniqueness and status differently under multiple contexts, for example purchasing for a work environment versus purchasing fashion for recreational purposes. The literature assumes that consumers hold strong to underlying motivations, but motivations may differ depending on the context. Future research may consider providing respondents with a number of contexts when applying the same scale to ascertain whether their motivations differ depending on the intended environment for usage or whether status consumption and consumers' need for uniqueness remain consistent.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire and Stimulus

APPENDIX B

Curtin University Ethics Form C

APPENDIX C

SPSS Results and Analysis Output

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